MERRY ANIMAL TALES

BY

MADGE A. BIGHAM

This book is the property of the School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, issued to the ROXBOROUGH SCHOOL by The Board of Public Ed...

Placed in use 9/1/22

Pupil's Name _____

Catherine

MERRY
ANIMAL TALES

MR. AND MRS. BLACKRAT AND THEIR SON BLACKIE.

FRONTISPIECE.

MERRY ANIMAL TALES

A BOOK OF OLD FABLES
IN NEW DRESSES

BY

MADGE A. BIGHAM

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF MOTHER GOOSE VILLAGE"
"WITHIN THE SILVER MOON," AND
"FANCIFUL FLOWER TALES"

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARA E. ATWOOD

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1922

Copyright, 1906,
By Little, Brown, and Company.

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

TO MY FATHER

ROBERT W. BIGHAM

WHO MOST OF ALL

WOULD HAVE RELISHED THESE TALES

PREFACE

FABLES have figured in all ages and in the primeval history of all nations as a favorite means of instruction of children as well as of men. Their charm consists in the transference to inanimate objects and animals of the qualities of human beings. The very novelty and utter impossibility of the thing catches and holds the interest, and it is then your moral is skilfully dropped in — on just *how* skilfully depends the value of the fable, at least for the child, for woe be unto him who preaches in the Kingdom of Childhood. The author of these tales has borne this fact in mind; and in this collection of fables, based on La Fontaine's, you will find many old friends smiling at you

from the pages — but with fingers on lips and repressed laughter, as they point you to the **children.**

MADGE A. BIGHAM.

ATLANTA, GA.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	Blackie's Fright	1
II.	The Rat Meeting	7
III.	Blackie's Country Home	12
IV.	Mr. Lion	18
V.	Mrs. Blackrat's House Party	23
VI.	The Gray Cat's Tricks	31
VII.	Blackie and Mr. Bullfrog	38
VIII.	Blackie at Madison Square	46
IX.	Blackie in the Trap	53
X.	Blackie's Picnic	60
XI.	Blackie's Egg	68
XII.	Ringtail's Journey	73
XIII.	The Circus Parade	78
XIV.	The Cheese House	85
XV.	Mrs. Grasshopper Gay	90
XVI.	Mrs. Thrifty-Ant's Fall	97
XVII.	The Wax House	103
XVIII.	Mr. Rabbit's Ears	108
XIX.	Jimmy Gnat	114

Chapter		Page
XX.	The Wee Birdies	118
XXI.	The Wee Birdies' Neighbors	124
XXII.	Mr. Fox and his Dinner Party	131
XXIII.	Mr. Heron's Dinner Party	135
XXIV.	Mr. Fox and the Turkey Tree	139
XXV.	Mr. Fox and Mr. Thomas Cat	144
XXVI.	Mr. Thomas Cat's Chestnuts	148
XXVII.	Mr. Eagle and Old Mrs. Owl	153
XXVIII.	Old Mrs. Owl's Children	157
XXIX.	Little Miss Magpie	163
XXX.	Little Miss Magpie at Madison Square	169
XXXI.	Snowflake	174
XXXII.	Fleetfoot and Billy	180
XXXIII.	Kerchunk	186
XXXIV.	Kerchunk's Sisters	191
XXXV.	The Seven Little Travellers	196

Suggestions to Teachers 201

Seat Work 205

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat and their son Blackie *Frontispiece*

"She whacked away with the kitchen broom" . 27

"It was the little mistress of Madison Square who was doing the playing" 49

"Bobtail stood up on the stone wall" 81

"Then they began to fight" 183

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

"Cock-a-doodle-do" 5

"He saw it was only a little mouse" 15

"Away went Blackie with a big splash into the water" 42

"She opened the trap door, and out skipped Blackie" 58

"There stood Blackie, with only his head peeping through" 66

"Away they went, bumpty, bumpty, bump" . . 71

"You don't catch me wasting time in any such way!" 92

PAGE

"Jacky Limbo dropped his bow and arrow in a hurry" 101

"My ears are so long I am afraid somebody will *think* I have horns" 110

"A round shallow plate" 133

"A long glass bottle like this" 136

"Those turkeys had too much sense for that, so they stayed up in the tree" 141

"Then he gobbled up the chestnut very quickly" 151

"Mr. Eagle said, 'You can't!'" 154

"She drew the little cart with the ribbon harness" 166

"'Who's there?'" 178

"Kerchunk was the first one to jump into the water" 198

MERRY ANIMAL TALES

A BOOK OF OLD FABLES IN NEW DRESSES

CHAPTER I

BLACKIE'S FRIGHT

IN the garret of a great big house on Madison Square lived Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat and their little son Blackie. They thought Blackie was the finest fellow in all the world. He had a soft glossy coat, and a long slender tail, and a pair of the merriest black eyes that ever you saw.

Of course there were other rats living in the garret on Madison Square — more than a hundred, I guess, — mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles and cousins, besides great-great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers.

They all lived in the garret together; and fine times they had, too, scampering over the garret floor, or tipping down the winding stairway that led down, down, down to the big cool pantry where the fat cook kept all the cake and pies and cheese and butter and other nice things which rats like to eat.

It was there that they had the greatest fun. But something sorrowful happened one day, for a great big gray cat came to live in the house on Madison Square; and that was dreadful news to all the rats, I can tell you.

"Oh, dear, dear," they said, "why could n't that gray cat go somewhere else to live? Now he will always be after us!"

So, while the cat liked the rats, the rats did not like the cat, you see, and every time they saw the tip of his nose or even the end of his tail, away they would run, helter-skelter, pell-mell, head over heels, one right over the other, trying to get out of the way

of the great big gray cat, and oh, it would frighten them almost to death!

But I started out to tell you about Blackie, — Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat's little son. He had never seen a cat in all his life, and his mother had told him she hoped he never would. But of course he did, and it happened this way:

One morning Blackie was out in the back yard playing under the lumber pile, and all at once his mother heard him yell, and his father heard him squeal, and then Blackie came scampering up the back steps into the garret. And, only think, a tiny piece of his tail had been bitten off!

"Dear me, how dreadful!" said Mrs. Blackrat. "A piece of your beautiful tail! What have you been doing, Blackie? Come right here and tell me all about it!"

Blackie wiped away his tears and said: "Well, mother, I was just playing 'hopping' under the lumber pile, when all at

once I saw two queer things I had never seen before looking at me. One of them was ugly and the other was pretty."

"Tell me how the pretty one looked," said Mrs. Blackrat.

"Beautiful," said Blackie; "almost like us, mother, only ever so much larger. It came creeping, creeping towards me, and I could n't turn my head away for looking. It had a soft gray coat, and a pretty waving tail, and pink ears, and soft paws, and the brightest, kindest eyes.

"I was sure whatever it was it would be the very best friend to rats, and I was just waiting to speak to it, when the other ugly thing frightened me so I ran away."

"Tell me how the ugly thing looked," said Mrs. Blackrat.

"Oh, he looked dreadful!" said Blackie, with a shudder. "He had the ugliest head, with a bill that pecked, and just two feet, with the sharpest claws, and he was all

covered over with spotted feathers, and he had ugly wings, that went 'flap, flap,' at his sides; and when he saw me, why, he stretched out his great long neck and said, 'Cock-a-doodle-do! Cock-a-doodle-do! Kut, kut, kut, kut, kut, kut, kut, kut!' He made such a noise that it frightened me out of my senses, and I came running up the steps to you, and as I ran something bit my tail, and I know it must have been that ugly, crowing thing!"

"Oh, Blackie, Blackie, my dear little son!" said Mrs. Blackrat, "what a wonder that you ever came back to me alive! You poor little thing, you do not know a cat from a rooster! Don't you know the thing you

saw and called ugly was your best friend, and really saved your life when he frightened you away by crowing? He was only a good old rooster, and would not even hurt a flea.

"But the other thing you saw, Blackie, and thought so beautiful, — why, that was the horrid gray cat you have heard me tell about; and cats are never friends to rats — they eat every one they lay their claws on; and it's a wonder he did not eat you just now, instead of the tip end of your tail. Blackie, Blackie, suppose you had never come back to me!"

Then Blackie nestled close to his mother's side, and promised never, never to play under the lumber pile again, although he would like to thank Mr. Rooster for saving his life.

"You see," said Mrs. Blackrat, "we cannot always tell our friends by their *looks*. Come here, my son, and let me tie up the end of your beautiful tail."

CHAPTER II

THE RAT MEETING

A FEW days after Blackie's tail was bitten Mr. Blackrat came through the door of his home almost as fast as a lightning flash. "Why, what can be the matter, my dear? Why so much hurry?" said Mrs. Blackrat, looking up from her work.

"Matter!" said Mr. Blackrat. "I almost lost my head just now, — why, my life is growing to be a daily misery to me. I cannot even go into the pantry for a slice of cake, or a sip of cream, or a bit of cheese, without being jumped at by that old gray cat, — my heart is thumping now like a churn dasher! If we rats ever expect to have any more peace, we have just got to get rid of that cat, or move out!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Blackrat, sweetly, "I know it. Life is hardly worth living since that hateful cat came here. He even bit a piece of Blackie's tail off the other day, and the dear little fellow has never been quite well since. He is still afraid to go out to play. I wish we could do something to get rid of this cat."

"And we shall!" said Mr. Blackrat, snapping his sharp black eyes. "I 'll not run from that cat another time! Blackie, my son, run around to every hole in the garret and tell every rat you see to meet me to-night at twelve o'clock on the top pantry shelf. We will talk over a plan to get rid of that gray cat. Run, my son, run! Joy cometh in the morning!" That was Mr. Blackrat's favorite saying.

So Blackie ran, and stopped at every door, and told every rat what Mr. Blackrat had said; and sure enough, that night at twelve o'clock every rat in the Madison Square

mansion, from the grayest, grizzliest one to wee little Blackie, Snowwhite, Brownie, and Ringtail, came dressed in their Sunday best.

They sat in rows on the top pantry shelf, and talked and talked and talked and talked, until the crack of dawn, about how they coud get rid of the old gray cat.

At last Mr. Blackrat said, as he stroked his long gray whiskers: "Ladies and gentlemen, a fine idea has struck me, and I have the best of plans. Why not hang a bell around the gray cat's neck? Wherever she goes the bell will ring, and we can then hear her coming, and get out of the way in a graceful manner, without falling over one another and almost breaking our necks in the scuffle!"

"Good! Good! How wonderful! How wise!" cried all the rats in a voice. "A most excellent plan indeed!"

"I think so," said Mr. Blackrat. "Now all who are in favor of this plan will please

stand on their heads!" And *every* rat stood on his head, with tail on high, — even little Blackie, and Snowwhite, and Brownie, and Ringtail, — all of them stood on their heads.

"Good!" said Mr. Blackrat, when they had all turned back. "Now, one more question: All who are willing to hang that bell around the gray cat's neck will please stand on their heads." And not a single rat moved, — not even Blackie, nor Snowwhite, nor Brownie, nor Ringtail. They only sat still and blinked and blinked and looked at one another.

"I could n't," said Blackie; "he might get another bite of my tail."

"No," said Mrs. Blackrat, "I would n't allow Blackie to do such a thing; he is too little, and I have heart trouble, you know."

"And I have my family to take care of — I could n't," said Mr. Fatrat.

"Nor I!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" came

the answers quick and thick. "No, not for anything!"

"Why be afraid?" said Mr. Blackrat; "we are not cowards!"

"Oh, I just could n't," said Ringtail, "because —" But he never finished his excuse, because just then something came creeping, creeping through the pantry door — you know what it was, — the big gray cat, — and with one great bounce he sprang to the pantry shelf, and how those rats did scatter! Mr. Blackrat in the lead — helter-skelter, pell-mell, one right over the other they tumbled, in the most disgraceful manner!

The big gray cat laughed and laughed as he curled down in Mr. Blackrat's seat on the pantry shelf.

"Why be afraid, my friends?" he said. "Hang a bell on my neck, indeed! Ha, ha!"

CHAPTER III

BLACKIE'S COUNTRY HOME

ONE night after Blackie had gone to bed Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat sat up by their fire, talking.

"You see, my dear," said Mr. Blackrat, "none of us will ever be able to hang a bell around that gray cat's neck, and the only thing we can do now is to move away to the country. I know where there is a most beautiful log house for rent, and the sooner we move the better, or little Blackie will lose the rest of his tail, and you will die of heart trouble, and I shall lose my head!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Blackrat, with a sigh. "You know I always liked city life, though, and it is hard that I have to give

it up just for a horrid old cat. But then, the summer time is coming, and maybe the country air will be good for Blackie's tail, so if you really wish to go we will tell our friends good-bye and leave to-morrow."

"All right," said Mr. Blackrat, rubbing his paws together; "that is better. You are a dear little wife to move to the country just to please Blackie and me." Then they both tumbled into bed and were soon fast asleep.

Sure enough, they moved the very next day, and Blackie hopped up and down with joy, because he loved to move to the country. His new home was a great log, with a hollow hall running all the way from the front door to the back door, and outside pretty vines climbed up and almost covered the log house.

And, best of all, no big gray cat was there to bite his tail and scare him, so he just played and played and played all the time,

— except when he studied his lessons, — "leap frog" and "hopping" and "jumping" and "hiding" and everything else, from one end of that log to the other. You know he had a good time.

One morning, while Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat were planting peas, Blackie thought he would take a walk in the woods, so off he went, skipping down a little winding path as happy as could be.

By and by he came to something lying on the grass, — something very large and soft and gray. Oh, no, it was n't the gray cat — why, it was ever so much larger than a cat — it was a big lion, fast asleep on the grass. But Blackie had never seen a lion, you know, so he did not know what it was.

He thought it was just a little hill, so he said, "Ho! ho! what a nice little soft hill! I believe I will stop here and play 'sliding down.'" So he just crawled up on Mr. Lion's back, and was having the finest time

sliding, when all at once Mr. Lion waked up just as Blackie was starting down again.

"Goodness gracious me!" said Mr. Lion, scratching, "that feels like a very big

flea running around on my back; let me see." So he reached up his big fat paw and grabbed Blackie by the ears, and pulled him down and held him tight, and when he saw it was only a little mouse, why, he was

so very much surprised he did n't know what to do.

Blackie was surprised too, and afraid, but he said: "Oh, oh, do excuse me and let me go this time — indeed, I never will slide down your back any more. I thought you were just a hill!"

"A hill!" said Mr. Lion. "Ha, ha, ha!" and he opened his mouth so wide and laughed so loud that it frightened Blackie more than ever; and he said: "Oh, oh, I know my mother wants to see me right now — please let me go!"

"You poor little mouse," said Mr. Lion, "I guess she does, and I 'm sorry I frightened you so; run on home to your mother, and be careful next time what kind of hills you slide down!"

"Thank you ever so much for letting me go," said Blackie; "some day I will do something kind for you."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Lion, and he laughed

again. "You are too little to do anything for a big lion. Now run away home, and let me finish my nap."

So away scampered Blackie down the forest path, just as fast as he could fly, and when he got home he told his mother the most wonderful tale about sliding down a hill and seeing the grandfather of all the cats; and Mrs. Blackrat did not believe one word of it. She just said, "Oh, Blackie, hush! you have *such* an imagination!"

CHAPTER IV

MR. LION

ONE morning it rained and rained at Blackie's house, and his mother had the headache, and Blackie could n't go out to play, so he was having a most dreadful time.

Everything he did his mother said "Don't!" If he ran to the front door she said "Don't!" If he ran to the back door she said "Don't!" If he climbed up the side of the wall she said "Don't!" If he climbed down the side of the wall she said "Don't!" too, and if he played leap-frog or hiding or marbles, why, she said "Don't!" So Blackie did not know what to do!

Well, at last Blackie ran out of the back door and underneath the house to play. He

made a pretty playhouse, all by himself, and just as he finished the sun came out.

"Oh, now!" said Blackie, "I believe I will run out in the woods and find some pretty moss for a carpet, and some bits of china dishes. It has stopped raining, and mother won't care!"

Then, while Blackie was hunting moss and china, all at once he heard a great noise farther off in the woods: "Ro–ar! Come and help me! Ro–ar–r–r — Help me!"

Blackie listened and listened. "What can it be?" he said. "It seems to me I 've heard that voice before. Where was it?"

Then he climbed a high tree and looked and looked, and what do you think he saw?

It was Mr. Lion, and he was tied down to the ground in a strong net of ropes, so tight he could n't even stand up, and lay kicking on the ground, roaring like thunder.

At first Blackie felt afraid, and wanted to run home; but when he remembered how

kind Mr. Lion had been to him when he caught him sliding down his back, he slipped down the tree and ran as quickly as he could to Mr. Lion's side. "What is it?" said Blackie. "Are you in trouble? Can I help you?"

"Help me!" roared Mr. Lion. "How can a little mite like you help anything? Don't you see how I am tied down here with these thousand ropes, — so tight I cannot move? You know you can't help me!" And then Mr. Lion opened his big mouth and roared some more.

"Oh," said Blackie, "please don't do that! I can help you; just wait a minute. I will show you what my sharp teeth can do. I can cut those ropes in a little while."

"You can!" said Mr. Lion. "Well, I can't believe it! Are n't you the little mouse I caught in the woods not long ago?"

"Yes," said Blackie, "I 'm the very one, and I 've come to help you now. Watch

and see what I can do!" So Blackie went to work with his sharp little teeth, and gnawed those ropes, and gnawed and gnawed and gnawed until his jaws ached.

"Almost through?" said Mr. Lion. "I shall be so glad to be free one more time."

"Almost through," said Blackie; "only one more rope. Now! See if you can stand up." And sure enough, Mr. Lion gave a big shake, and stretched, and stood up straight, and stretched and stretched, and oh, it felt so good he just laughed and laughed a great roaring laugh.

"Oh–o–o! What a great big mouth you have!" said Blackie. "Do you bite?"

"Oh, no," said Mr. Lion, "not little fellows like you. Indeed, I thank you very much for helping me out of my trouble. I never dreamed a little mite like you could help a great big lion!"

"Oh, that was easy to do," said Blackie. "I said I was going to help you some day.

Now I must run home; my mother will wonder where I am."

" That 's so," said Mr. Lion, " and I must be going too, for Mrs. Lion will be wondering where I am."

So Mr. Lion ran through the woods to tell Mrs. Lion all about it, and little Blackie skipped through the woods to tell his mother all about it. But do you know, she would n't believe anything he said about it this time, either! She would n't! She just turned over in bed and said: "Oh, pshaw, Blackie, don't! Your imagination will kill me yet! "

Then Blackie went off and sat on the back steps, and wondered and wondered what imagination meant.

CHAPTER V

MRS. BLACKRAT'S HOUSE PARTY

MRS. BLACKRAT'S country house looked so pretty, with the vines climbing all about it, that she kept wishing her city friends might see it. She was talking about it one morning at the breakfast table, and Mr. Blackrat said, "My dear, why not give a house party?"

"That will be the very thing!" said Mrs. Blackrat. "We will invite all our friends from the big house on Madison Square. I know they will enjoy a week of pure, fresh air and sunshine, and peace from that horrid cat. We will invite them this very day!"

"Do, mother," said Blackie; "and ask the children, too, — Ringtail and Brownie and Snowwhite!"

"Don't, Blackie, don't!" said Mrs. Blackrat, holding up a warning finger. "How often have I told you not to speak unless you are spoken to? Of course the children will be invited, too. Eat your breakfast and keep quiet, sir!"

So Blackie cuddled down in his chair, with one eye on his father and one eye on his mother, and both ears wide open. He could hardly eat a mouthful for listening about that house party, and he was *so* glad when Mrs. Blackrat said: "Well, my dear, I 'll write the invitations this morning, and you may carry them to the city to-night. We will have the house party next week."

Mr. Blackrat rolled his thumbs over and over many times; then he said, as he looked over his glasses: "Suppose *you* take the invitations in to Madison Square, my dear. I think I could manage to keep house with Blackie while you are away."

You see, Mr. Blackrat was thinking about

the big gray cat at Madison Square, only he did not like to say so. But Mrs. Blackrat said she did not feel well enough to go, and she did not like to leave Blackie. "And besides, I shall have the house-cleaning to look after, my dear, so I think you had better go."

"Very well, my dear, just as you wish," said Mr. Blackrat; and late that night he carried the invitations to the city. All of his friends at Madison Square were glad to see him, and crowded around him to hear about Mrs. Blackrat and the country home and dear little Blackie.

Then, when they had talked and talked and talked, and it was time for Mr. Blackrat to think about starting home, they said: "Come into the pantry with us and have a little lunch before you go. The cook has just cut a new cheese to-day, and there is jelly and sponge cake and a pan of cream."

Mr. Blackrat's eyes sparkled. He had n't

tasted cheese since he moved to the country, and he was very fond of it. So he said, "I believe I will"; and into the pantry all the rats skipped, as happy as happy could be.

But just as Mr. Blackrat began to nibble a hole in the cheese, and the other rats were helping themselves to cream and jelly, the big fat cook opened the pantry door softly, and blim! blim! blim! she whacked away with the kitchen broom; and away those rats scattered, — pell-mell, helter-skelter, head over heels, one right over the other, — Mr. Blackrat in the lead, as ever. You never saw such a sight in your life, and I tell you they were glad to get back to the garret.

"Goodness, gracious, me! my friends," said Mr. Blackrat, puffing and blowing, "what a life you must live! Why, I wouldn't live in the city for anything in the world! Maybe I don't get so many

"SHE WHACKED AWAY WITH THE KITCHEN BROOM."

good things to eat in the country, but what I do get I can eat in peace, without getting my head whacked off by the cook, or bitten off by the cat, — I 'd rather go without cheese and jelly forever! My, how my heart thumps! I must go home. You all come out to the country and see us next week. You won't get your heads knocked off, I 'm sure. Good-bye; I must be going."

So off Mr. Blackrat went, as fast as he could trot, and when he got back to his quiet home in the country he felt very happy to know that he was safe once more. Mrs. Blackrat was glad to hear from her old friends again, and sure enough, the very next week they all came out to the house party, and everybody had a fine time, — especially Blackie and his little playmates, Ringtail, Snowwhite, and Brownie. They had the best time of all! Why, Blackie never got tired of telling about Mr. Lion, and Ringtail and Brownie and Snowwhite

never got tired of listening, — and they did n't say one word about "imagination," either.

So when the time came to go home, nobody wanted to go. "True," said little Snowwhite, "you don't have sponge cake and jelly to eat in the country, — only peas and roots, — but then, there is no big fat cook to knock your head off."

"And," said Blackie, "no big gray cat to — "

"Don't! don't! don't! Blackie! You know I cannot stand to hear you even call the name of that horrid gray cat! Don't! don't!" said Mrs. Blackrat.

And Blackie hushed.

CHAPTER VI

THE GRAY CAT'S TRICKS

WHILE the rats were away at Mrs. Blackrat's house party, the big gray cat missed them very much. He could n't tell what *had* become of them. The cook did not know, the rooster did not know, and even the little terrier dog could not tell, so the big gray cat thought they must all be sick.

"Dear me, I hope it is n't mumps they have, or measles, or whooping-cough," he said, as he stroked down the fur on his pretty white vest; "mumps and measles and whooping-cough are catching, — I heard my mother say so. But what can be the matter with those rats? — I have n't seen

them for a week. Maybe the cook has been putting out rat poison. Surely she would n't do a thing so mean!"

And so the gray cat wondered, and wondered, and wondered.

Now those rats knew the gray cat was going to miss them while they were away at the house party, so they said: "Let us fool the gray cat, and not let him know when we get back from the country, — maybe he will think we have gone away forever!"

So Mr. Blackrat gave them a big bundle of peas and roots to carry home to the garret, and when they got there they were just as quiet as quiet could be, and did not go near the pantry for two or three whole days, but just nibbled peas and roots, and roots and peas, hoping and hoping the gray cat would miss them so much he would go away to some other house to live, — that would be joy indeed!

But that old gray cat was very smart, and he believed all along those rats were trying to fool him, and were hiding up in the garret; and sure enough one day, while he was stretched out on the garden fence sunning, what should he see peeping at him from the attic window but the rats, — every one of them!

"I thought so!" said the gray cat. "I thought so! Never mind, I know a trick or two myself, and I shall fool them. I believe I 'll play that I am dead, right now, and see if they won't come down to see, — *then* I 'll grab them sure!"

So the gray cat tied a string to the fence, and hung to it by his hind legs, with his eyes shut tight and his head hanging down. The rats were watching, — Snowwhite, Brownie, and Ringtail, every one, — and by and by little Snowwhite said: "Look, Brownie, I do believe the gray cat is dead, — see how still he is, hanging there,

and his eyes are shut *so* tight! I know he must be dead."

"I believe he is," said Brownie.

"I believe he is," said Ringtail.

"Oh, oh, oh! the gray cat is dead!" said all the rats. "Come, let 's go down in the yard and play; *we 're* not afraid now! The gray cat 's dead! We know he is dead, because his eyes are shut!"

So every one of them — Brownie and Snowwhite and Ringtail, all — ran laughing and dancing down the steps, right into the back yard; and do you know, Ringtail even took a stick and poked the gray cat right on his side, and just at that very minute, *down* jumped the gray cat, with a great big dash, and if *he* had n't fallen on the wrong side of that fence, why, one of those rats most surely would have been caught and gobbled up that time!

My, how they did scamper back up those garret steps in the latest rat fashion, —

pell-mell, helter-skelter, head over heels, one right after the other!

Away they went. The gray cat thought it was very funny; he laughed and laughed and laughed. "Never mind," he said, "I 'll fool them again; rats do not have very good memories, — just wait until to-morrow."

And what do you think he did? That gray cat certainly was a funny cat! I 'll tell you what he did. He jumped into a tub full of meal in the back yard, and covered himself all over with meal, — his legs and head and all, with just a little hole for his nose to breathe through, — that was all.

He knew how much rats like to eat meal, and he kept just as still as still could be, so the rats would come down to the yard and jump into the tub, you know. Then the gray cat thought he would surely catch them.

Ringtail was the first rat to see the meal, and he called all the other rats to the garret window, and they all came crowding and

peeping over one another's shoulder to see the wonderful tub of meal.

"Oh, what a beautiful tub of meal!" said Snowwhite.

"Oh, what a beautiful tub of meal!" said Brownie.

And every one of those rats said the same thing, and then they all wanted to go right down in the yard and jump into the tub, and eat some of the meal.

Old Father Graybeard was the oldest and the smartest rat of all. He said: "No, sir! I shall not jump into that tub! I've seen rat-traps before to-day, and all of them are not made of wire, either! I believe that tub of meal is a rat-trap, and what is more, I believe that gray cat is hiding under that meal, though if Ringtail and Snowwhite and Brownie wish to go down and see, why, I'm willing!"

"You won't catch *me* going," said Brownie.

"You won't catch *me* going," said Ringtail.

"And you won't catch *me* going," said little Snowwhite.

"Very well," said Father Graybeard, "we will leave the meal for a while, and the next time we look at it, if we see a hole in the meal, we shall know that the gray cat *was* covered under it, and jumped out because he got tired waiting for us to come." So, by and by, when Ringtail and Brownie and Snowwhite ran to the garret window to look again, there was a big hole right in the middle of that meal, and the gray cat was not anywhere to be seen.

"Oh–o!" said Snowwhite, "just suppose we *had* gone down!"

"Oh–o!" said Ringtail.

"Oh–o!" said Brownie.

"I told you so!" said old Father Graybeard. "I told you so!"

CHAPTER VII

BLACKIE AND MR. BULLFROG

MR. and Mrs. Blackrat were invited out to spend the day. Blackie was to stay at home and study his "a, b, c's."

He wanted to go with his mother and father to spend the day, too, but Mrs. Blackrat said: "Don't, Blackie, don't! You always wiggle so! Be a good child now, and stay at home and study your a, b, c's. And remember, don't go anywhere — you hear?"

"Yes, mother," said Blackie. Mrs. Blackrat did not allow Blackie to say, "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," — she said it was n't proper.

Well, after Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat went away, Blackie sat nodding over his a, b, c's,

— he always went to sleep when he studied his a, b, c's, because he said he could n't see any sense in them unless they spelt something like cat or rat. Anyway, just as he was nodding off, there came a big rap, tap, tap, at the front door. "Oh," said Blackie, "some one is knocking,—some one has come to see me! Oh, how fine!"

So he ran down quickly to the door, and when he opened it there stood Mr. Bullfrog, all swelled out and dressed in a new green vest and spotted trousers.

Now, Mrs. Blackrat did not allow Blackie to play with frogs. She had often told him they were rough and rude to rats, like cats and dogs, and they would surely bite if they got a chance. So he must never go with them. But there stood Mr. Bullfrog at Blackie's door, and he looked very polite and very smiling.

"Good-morning, Blackie," said Mr. Bullfrog, with a low bow. "I knew

you were by yourself this morning and might get lonely, so I 've come to invite you down to my house, in the bottom of the pond. There are many beautiful things down there for you to see, — pebbles and moss and shells, — would n't you like to go?"

"Oh, no," said Blackie, "I could n't! Mother told me not to, — she might care. And then, I do not know how to swim. I should drown under the water."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Bullfrog, "I 'm a good frog, — your mother would be glad to have you go with me, and besides, I will hold you by the hand when we go through the water, and you can't get drowned. What if you do get a little bit wet? — your coat will soon dry off!"

"Oh, I can't," said Blackie, "[illegible] me to study my a, b, c s."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Bullfrog, "a, b, c's are no good! Do go! Your mother

won't care, and I will give you some sponge cake and jelly."

You know how much Blackie liked sponge cake and jelly,—he thought it was the nicest thing in the world; so he forgot all about what his mother had told him about Mr. Bullfrog, and how he might bite his head off if he got a chance. He just forgot everything but the sponge cake and jelly, and so he told Mr. Bullfrog he would go with him. Too bad for even a little rat to forget what his mother told him, was n't it?

They started out, and pretty soon Blackie stood on the bank of the pond, ready to jump in.

"Hold tight to my hind leg," said Mr. Bullfrog, "and when I count three, jump! Ready! One, two, three!" and away went Blackie with a big splash into the water,—down, down, down!

Oh, how it did scare him!

The water got into his nose and eyes and mouth, and he wished and wished he had minded his mother and stayed at home.

"Let me go!" said Blackie. "I want to go back home!"

"No, you won't," said Mr. Bullfrog. "You sha'n't go back home, ever; I've got you now, and I am going to keep you for my little rat."

"You sha'n't!" said Blackie. "I'm going back home to my mother; let me go, I say!"

So Blackie pulled and pulled up, while Mr. Bullfrog pulled and pulled down, and he was so much stronger than little Blackie

that he most surely would have pulled him down to the very bottom of the pond if it had not been for a great big eagle who was flying over the pond and saw them.

Eagles like to eat frogs just as well as frogs like to eat rats, you know, so when Mr. Eagle saw Blackie and Mr. Bullfrog quarrelling and pulling in the water, he just flew down and grabbed Mr. Bullfrog by the neck, and away he sailed up into the air, and Blackie was still hanging on to Mr. Bullfrog's hind leg, too.

Don't you know, that frightened Blackie! Why, he thought he was going up to the moon! But just then Mr. Eagle gave such a big swoop of his wings that it shook Blackie so hard he let Mr. Bullfrog's hind leg go, and down he came, tumbling to the ground — over and over and over! Such a bump as he did get! He was so sore he could hardly hobble home, — but he was glad to get there. Mrs. Blackrat had just

come in and put away her Sunday bonnet, and then, "Why, Blackie!" she said, "where have you been? You naughty, naughty child! Just look at your coat and face and hands! Where did you get so wet and muddy? I thought you were to stay at home and study your a, b, c's. What does this mean, sir?"

Blackie felt very miserable and he wanted to cry, but he did n't.

He told his mother all about Mr. Bullfrog, and how he had promised him cake and jelly to go home with him, and then how the eagle had carried them both up in the air, and how he had been shaken off and came tumbling to the ground with a most dreadful bump. "Just see my bump, mother," said Blackie. "Is n't it a big one?"

"A very good thing indeed, sir," said Mrs. Blackrat. "I like that bump! But you had better be glad that the eagle shook

you off, or you might have been eaten up by now. The frog wished to do the very same thing to you that the eagle will do to him. It is a wonder that you ever got home alive, — Blackie, Blackie, Blackie! I am ashamed that Mr. Bullfrog would tell a story about sponge cake and jelly, and I am ashamed that you would disobey your mother. Go wash your face and hands, sir, and go to bed without any supper. Blackie, Blackie, Blackie!"

Mrs. Blackrat did not believe in corporal punishment.

CHAPTER VIII

BLACKIE AT MADISON SQUARE

"MY dear," said Mr. Blackrat, "I must go into town on business to-night, to see about my life insurance papers, and I think I shall carry Blackie with me to make a little visit to Ringtail and Brownie and Snowwhite."

"Oh, don't go, Mr. Blackrat," said Mrs. Blackrat. "You know something will be sure to happen to Blackie if he goes. He is so wiggly and so restless the gray cat will be sure to get him, and I shall not have one moment's peace while you are gone, for worrying over it, — please don't!"

But Blackie pleaded so hard, and promised to be so very careful, that at last his mother said he might go and stay three

days. Mrs. Blackrat had a way of saying "don't" and "no" anyway, and then at last doing the very thing she said she would n't do. I hope your mother does n't do that way.

Anyway, Blackie was so happy to go he could hardly wait for the time to come, because he had not been back to the big house on Madison Square since he moved away, and he was very anxious to play in the garret once more.

So when Mr. Blackrat started out Blackie ran with a hop and a skip by his side, and when they reached the city and climbed the garret stairs, somebody said: "Oh, here is Blackie come to see us; goody!"

That was Ringtail.

Then there was a scampering across the floor, and Brownie said: "Oh, here is Blackie come to see us; goody, goody!"

And then little Snowwhite said: "Oh,

goody, goody, goody, here is Blackie come to see us; goody, goody, goody!"

Then what a fine time those little rats did have, playing and playing and playing. When bedtime came they were so tired that they cuddled up in the same little bed for a nap, and soon Ringtail and Brownie and Snowwhite were fast asleep.

But Blackie could not go to sleep, because he always wanted his mother at night, — you know how it is, — and he kept thinking and thinking about her, when all at once he heard music somewhere, so soft and sweet and beautiful. Blackie wondered where it came from, and he ran to the garret steps to listen; then, before he knew what he was about, he ran *down* the garret steps, following the sound of the music, — on and on down the long, broad hall.

Then he came to a room with big folding-doors, and right through the crack he crept, and — yes, he had found the music; and his

"IT WAS THE LITTLE MISTRESS OF MADISON SQUARE WHO WAS DOING THE PLAYING."

bright black eyes were full of joy. You didn't know rats liked music, did you? Well, they do, and Blackie was so carried away with it he sat up on his hind legs in the corner and crossed his front legs, and wiggled his tail, and listened, and listened, and listened.

It was the little mistress of Madison Square who was doing the playing. She sat at the piano practising, counting softly, "One, two, three, four; one, two, three, four." Her foot just reached the pedal, for she was only seven, you know, with soft brown curls and violet eyes, and the sweetest, sunniest little face. No wonder she made sweet music, this little mistress of Madison Square!

By and by she looked over her shoulder to see what time it was, and there in the corner she saw Blackie, sitting up on his hind legs, listening. Of course she stopped playing to laugh, and then Blacki

into the hall; but as soon as she began playing again, Blackie skipped back, and sat in the corner and listened and listened. He thought the music was so sweet he could listen to it always, so the little girl played softly, on and on, watching Blackie over her shoulder.

All at once the hall door slammed, and it frightened Blackie so! He thought the gray cat had him, and away he ran, helter-skelter, pell-mell, up the garret steps, as he always did when he was frightened. How his heart did thump! But he cuddled down by little Snowwhite as still as still could be.

Then all was quiet, and he heard no more music. You see the little girl had finished her practice, and ran off to tell her mother about the queer little rat who sat in the corner to hear her play, — counting softly, "One, two, three, four; one, two, three, four."

CHAPTER IX

BLACKIE IN THE TRAP

BLACKIE had only one more day to stay at Madison Square, then Mr. Blackrat was coming to take him home, so of course he and Brownie and Ringtail and Snowwhite wanted to have all the fun they could. They had been sitting up in the sunny window-seat, listening to Father Graybeard talk about traps.

He told them about every kind of rat-trap you can think of, so they would be careful and never get caught in one, you see. Then Blackie told about Mr. Bull-frog; and Snowwhite told about the gray cat hanging on the fence, playing "dead"; and Brownie told about the gray cat hiding in the tub of meal, to get a chance to bite them.

"Yes, sir," said Father Graybeard, "you little rats had better be careful, and listen to your elders, or *you 'll* get caught in a trap some day."

But they said they never would, and ran off up the side of the wall to play hiding; and by and by Brownie said: "I 'm just as hungry as hungry can be; let 's go down to the pantry and find something nice to eat."

And Ringtail and Blackie and Snowwhite said, "Yes, let 's do!"

So off they scampered to the pantry; and there were pies and cream and jelly cake on the pantry shelf, and down on the floor Blackie saw a queer little wire house, with an open wire chimney to it, and the biggest, nicest piece of fresh cheese, right down on the floor of the little house.

"We 'd better not touch that," said Snowwhite. "The wire house *might* be one of those traps Father Graybeard told us about."

"Pshaw," said Blackie, "I don't believe it! That is just a piece of cheese the cook does n't want, and I 'm going in to eat it, because the door is open, and so is the chimney."

So, before Snowwhite could say another word, in went Blackie, right down the chimney of the little wire house; and, sure enough, it was a trap, and when Blackie got in he could n't get out.

"Oh–o!" said Ringtail, "Blackie 's gone now!"

"Oh–o!" said Snowwhite, "I told you so, Blackie!"

Then Brownie said: "Hush, I hear somebody coming," and sure enough, the cook opened the pantry door, and away ran Brownie and Snowwhite and Ringtail — one right behind the other — up the garret steps, leaving Blackie all by himself in the trap.

"Oh, yes," said the big fat cook, as she

stooped down to look in the trap, "I 've got you now! You are the very rat that has been eating up my pies and cakes. Who invited you into my pantry, I 'd like to know?"

Blackie was too scared to say a word. He just sat up on his hind legs and crossed his front paws, as his mother told him to when he wanted to say "Please," and there was such a cunning look in his bright black eyes that the big fat cook just had to laugh; and then she stepped to the pantry door and called: "Dorothy! Oh, Miss Dorothy! Run here quickly! I 've got something to show you."

Then Blackie heard a door open, and a pair of feet came dancing down the hall, and in rushed the little mistress of Madison Square, — the very same little girl that Blackie had seen playing so sweetly on the piano; and she had the same kind face, and the long brown curls.

"Why, Mammy Jule," she said, stooping down by the side of the wire cage, "what are you going to do with this dear little rat?"

"Why, I 'm going to give him to the gray cat," said the big fat cook. "Is n't he the very little gentleman that has been stealing my pies and cream and cake for these many days? Of course I 'm going to give him to the cat!"

"Oh, Mammy Jule, please don't!" said the little girl; "this is the very same little rat that watched me practise the other night. See how he holds his front paws, and how cunning he is sitting on his hind legs. I 'm sure he 's saying, 'Please don't give me to the cat! I won't do so any more!' Oh, give him to me, Mammy Jule, — please do!"

Now, what do you think the big fat cook said? At first she shook her head and said, "No." But how could she keep from saying "Yes," when the little girl begged so

hard and kept patting her rough black hand with her own pink palm? Of course she had to say "Yes," so she handed the trap to the dear little mistress of Madison Square. You know what she did, don't you, without my saying another word? Yes, she opened the trap door, and out skipped Blackie, and up the garret steps, happier than he had ever been before.

Ringtail and Brownie ran out to meet him, and little Snowwhite rubbed her soft cheek against him. She had been crying because she thought she would never see

Blackie any more. But now they were all glad once more, and Blackie never again went near another rat-trap, for, as Father Graybeard said: "Little rats have to be caught before they learn what rat-traps are. They will not believe their elders."

Pretty soon Mr. Blackrat came and carried Blackie home; and when he curled up by his mother's side he told her all about the pretty music he had heard, and the wire trap, and the dear little mistress of Madison Square.

And what do you suppose she said? Why, she would n't believe him! She just said: "Blackie, hush! Your imagination is something terrible!"

Now, was n't she a queer mother?

CHAPTER X

BLACKIE'S PICNIC

IT was one night while his mother was putting him to bed that Blackie begged to go out in the woods and have a picnic all by himself.

"Why, Blackie," said Mrs. Blackrat, "don't! How queer you are! Who ever heard of having a picnic all by yourself, anyway?"

"Please, mother, do," said Blackie, patting her on the cheek, "just this once! I 'll be *so* good!"

So Mrs. Blackrat said: "Well, go right to sleep and hush talking, and I will see about it in the morning."

"What does 'see about it' mean, mother? — does it mean 'yes'?" said Blackie.

"I guess so, if it does n't rain," said Mrs. Blackrat. "Now, not another word; go right to sleep."

So Blackie shut his eyes, and the next time he opened them it was daylight, and it was n't raining, and, sure enough, Mrs. Blackrat gave Blackie a lunch and started him off to the picnic; and as he skipped away she kept squealing out to him: "Now, be careful! Don't fall! Don't go near the water! Don't tear your coat! Don't stay out late! Don't — "

But Blackie did not hear the last "don't," because he was out of sight, you know, and oh, so happy, because he was going to have a picnic! "I wish Snowwhite and Ringtail and Brownie could have a picnic, too," said Blackie.

He had a very good time, and played all the morning with leaves and flowers and grass, and when dinner time came he spread his lunch on a rock by the spring, and ate

his picnic dinner. There were roasted peas, and a baked potato root, and a slice of dried apple.

"Such a dear little mother," said Blackie, "to give me this good lunch!" After dinner he played again, and then ran down a little path to hunt wild strawberries to carry home for Mr. and Mrs. Blackrat's supper.

"Poor mother and father!" said Blackie, "they could n't come to my picnic; I will take them something good." While he was hunting berries he came to a very queer house with a tiny, tiny little crack in it, just large enough for Blackie to squeeze through.

"Oho," said Blackie, "just see! A house full of corn! I believe I won't hunt any more strawberries; I will stay here and eat some of this corn, and then carry some home. Won't mother be glad!" So, when he tasted the corn, it was so very good he ate and ate until he could n't eat any more! Then he just curled up in a nest of corn

and went sound asleep. And, just think, when Blackie waked up he had slept such a long time the moon was shining, and it was night time!

"Oh–o! what will mother do with me!" said Blackie. "She told me not to stay out late. I must hurry home as fast as I can, because she might think I am lost."

So he hurried to the tiny little crack, but though he squeezed and squeezed, he could n't get through at all. "What makes me so very *fat?*" said Blackie. "This is the door I came through this afternoon. Why can't I get out now?"

If you had been there, could you have told Blackie why? Well, Mrs. Blackrat waited and waited for Blackie, and when he did n't come home to supper she did not know what to think. "Blackie shall never go to another picnic the longest day he lives," said Mrs. Blackrat. "I told him not to stay out late, and here the moon is shining and

he has not come home! We must look for him, Mr. Blackrat. You go one way and I will go the other."

So they looked and looked for Blackie, and then Mrs. Blackrat began to cry, because she said she knew Blackie had tumbled into the water and been drowned, and she never would see him any more.

But Mr. Blackrat said: "Oh, no, my dear. I would n't cry and say such things as that. Blackie is just lost; he is a bright little fellow and will find his way home in the morning. You run home and go to bed and I will look for Blackie."

But Mrs. Blackrat said she could n't go to sleep with Blackie lost in the woods in the dark night, so she trotted on by the side of Mr. Blackrat, looking everywhere for Blackie.

By and by they came to the spring, and saw the very rock where Blackie had eaten his dinner, for there were the scraps of

roasted peas and potato root and dried apple.

Next they found the little path twisting through the woods, and some tiny foot-prints in the sand, and Mr. Blackrat said, "Whose tracks are these, I wonder?"

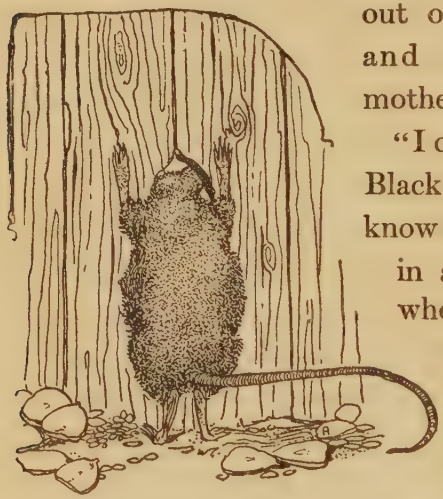
"Why, they are Blackie's tracks!" said Mrs. Blackrat, hopping up and down with joy. "I 'd know Blackie's tracks anywhere, — they are the most beautiful tracks in the world! Hurry, hurry, Mr. Blackrat; you are so slow!"

And so she ran on ahead of Mr. Blackrat, just as fast as she could go, following the little tracks in the sand, and, sure enough, they led right up to the little crack in the corn-house, and there stood Blackie, with only his head peeping through, so very fat he could not get any farther.

Mrs. Blackrat was so happy she did not know what to do, so she sat on a stone and fanned herself. Mr. Blackrat could n't do

a thing but laugh when he saw Blackie was so fat he could n't get through the crack.

"You little rascal," he said, "now are n't you a pretty sight! Why don't you come out of that door and meet your mother?"



"I c–a–n't!" said Blackie; "I don't know why. I came in all right, but when I started home——"

"You were so very fat you could n't squeeze through," said Mr. Blackrat. "I wonder how much of that corn you have eaten."

"Why, Blackie," said Mrs. Blackrat, "I am ashamed of you! To think that a son of mine could be so greedy! Blackie,

Blackie! Don't you touch another grain of that corn, sir, — not another grain, sir, until you have fallen off and lost enough of that fat to squeeze through that crack, you wretched child! Throw me out a few grains of that corn, and let me see how it tastes!"

Well, maybe you think it would be funny to be so very fat you could not squeeze through a crack, but it was n't very funny to Blackie, I can tell you! It took a long time for him to fall off, and he got so very hungry.

But Mrs. Blackrat would not let him taste a thing, — not even a grain of corn; and he did fall off at last, and get thin enough to squeeze through the little crack; and then he was the happiest little rat in the world, and you never caught Blackie going through any more little cracks, unless he was very sure he could get out again.

CHAPTER XI

BLACKIE'S EGG

ON Sunday afternoons Blackie and Mr. Blackrat always went out walking, because Mrs. Blackrat liked to take a Sunday nap and she could n't sleep very well when Blackie was there, because she said he wiggled and talked so much.

But Mr. Blackrat said that was just because Blackie did not have anything else to do, so they just went out walking, you know.

And you know how nice it is to go walking through the shady woods, seeing queer little things, and finding ferns and flowers and moss and rocks.

Blackie was always finding something pretty, so he hopped on ahead of Mr.

Blackrat, as happy as you please. By and by he came to a hollow stump in the fence corner, and only guess what Blackie found! A fine fresh egg, — but Blackie thought it was a rock!

"Why–y," said Mr. Blackrat, "that 's no rock; why, that 's a hen's egg, and it is very fine to eat. You nibble a hole in one end, Blackie, and I will nibble a hole in the other end, and then suck, and we will have an egg picnic right here in the woods, served in eggshell china as thin as ever was found in Madison Square."

And Mr. Blackrat's eyes twinkled and twinkled.

But just at that very minute he heard something growling and running through the woods. "What can it be, father?" said Blackie. "It does not sound like Mr. Lion."

"No, indeed," said Mr. Blackrat; "let me see!"

So he scrambled up on the fence to look, and then he scrambled down again very quickly, saying: "Run, run, my son, it's Mr. Fox; he is coming this way, and looks very angry, so we must hurry! Run, run!"

"Oh, father," said Blackie, "run and leave our egg! Can't we carry it home? Then mother can help us eat it."

Mr. Blackrat did not want to leave the nice egg, either, so he tried to get it upon his back, but he could n't. Then he tried to hold it in his front legs, and he tried to hold it in his hind legs, but every time it would slip. So he said: "Well, well, we will just have to leave it, — too bad, too bad!"

Then Blackie thought of a plan. "Quick, father, quick!" he said; "I know what we will do. I can be a little wagon, — my tail can be the handle; you drag me, while I lie over on my back and hold the egg."

Now, was n't that a funny wagon? — and

was n't Blackie a smart little rat to think of it?

"To be sure," said Mr. Blackrat. "Why, you 've got more sense than I thought you had. But won't it hurt?"

"Oh, I guess it will scratch me

up a little," said Blackie, "but that does n't matter. Pull away, — here we go!"

So Mr. Blackrat caught Blackie's tail, while he lay on his back and held tight to the egg, and away they went, bumpty, bumpty, bump, across the grass, and Mr.

Fox right after them. But he could n't catch Mr. Blackrat; he ran too fast for that, and the egg did n't get broken either.

"Mercy!" said Mrs. Blackrat, when she saw them coming. "Mercy on me! What *do* you mean, Mr. Blackrat, coming home in that disgraceful fashion? Sunday, too! Why, have you both gone crazy?"

Then she saw the egg, and how she did smile! She was n't angry any more, and said she did n't care if Blackie did spoil his Sunday coat,—could n't it be washed again?

And they certainly did have a good Sunday supper that night. They nibbled the roundest little hole in one end of that egg, and then Mrs. Blackrat would take a suck, and then Mr. Blackrat would take a suck, and then Blackie would take a suck; and it was the nicest supper that they had eaten in a long, long time.

CHAPTER XII

RINGTAIL'S JOURNEY

YOU remember Ringtail? Of course you do! He lived in the garret at Madison Square, with Snowwhite and Brownie, and all of Blackie's other friends. Well, something so funny happened to Ringtail one morning that I think I must tell you about it, — though I think Ringtail would rather you should not know it.

He decided one morning that he wanted to travel and see the world. Ringtail had never been anywhere except to the country once, and to peep through the back gate once, and he had heard Father Graybeard tell so much about mountains and rivers and hills and the great big ocean, that

he wanted to see what such things looked like, so he started out without even telling his mother "good-bye," or the cat, or Father Graybeard, or the big fat cook. Surely he should have told some one "good-bye" before starting out on such a long journey.

But Ringtail forgot; so he skipped through the gate and away he went. By and by he came to a pile of dirt the trash-man had thrown out. "My, my," said Ringtail, "is n't that a great big mountain? I guess it is the one Father Graybeard was talking about, —

> "'So round, so big, so high,
> It reaches almost to the sky.'"

Then when Ringtail had looked and looked and looked, he ran on a little farther, and then he came to a mud puddle, with little broken sticks floating in it.

"Oh–o! This must be a big lake," said Ringtail; "only see the little fishes floating in it!"

Now was n't that queer for Ringtail to think sticks were fishes?

Next Ringtail came to a place where the washerwoman had emptied her tub, and what do you think he thought it was? "Why," said Ringtail, "this must be the great big ocean that Father Graybeard tells about! Is n't it a *great big* ocean! Who would think the world was such a wonderful place?"

Then, when he had looked at the puddle a long time, Ringtail skipped on and on, to see what else he could find; and by and by he came to the ocean, sure enough, and there were many pretty shells out on the sandy beach, — so many that Ringtail was kept so busy looking at them that he did not even see the big ocean waters, — the very thing he had wished most to see.

Some of these shells had oysters living in them, and every once in a while they would open their shell door to let the fresh air and

sunshine come in. Ringtail stood watching them for a while, and only guess what he said they were, — ships! Now, was n't Ringtail a funny little rat to think these oyster shells were really ships?

All at once Ringtail thought he would like to peep closer into these funny shells; so just as a big oyster opened his shell, Ringtail poked his head right in, and when he tried to pull his head out again he could n't, because the oyster had shut his shell tight, and it fitted over Ringtail's head, just like a little shell cap. How it did scare him!

Why, he turned around and away he ran, — blickerty, blickerty, blick! — back the very way he had come, through the little crack in the fence, up the stairs, and home again to the garret. The gray cat saw him, and he ran, too, — he had never seen a rat with a shell cap on before.

It took Father Graybeard, and Snow-

white, and Brownie — all three — to pull that oyster shell off Ringtail's head; and now Ringtail says the garret is a large enough place for him, and you won't catch him running off to see the world by himself any more, — not until he has more sense, at least.

He wrote Blackie a letter and told him about it, and Blackie laughed and laughed and laughed. And so did Blackie's father, and so did Blackie's mother.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CIRCUS PARADE

ONE bright moonlight night Mrs. Blackrat went out to her Anti-Cat Club meeting, and she left Mr. Blackrat at home to keep house and take care of Blackie.

"Let 's sit out on the log and tell tales," said Blackie.

"All right," said Mr. Blackrat. "My tale will be a truly true tale, because it really happened.

"Once upon a time all the large animals — like the elephant, the lion, the fox, and the wolf — were going to have a circus parade, and all the other animals were invited to stand by the roadside and watch them go by. Now, there was a little rat

named Bobtail, who went to the parade, and he climbed up on a rock wall, where he could see the best of all.

"Bobtail was one of those foolish little rats who think they know everything. He thought he was the smartest, wisest, best little rat in all the world, and while the parade was passing by he stood up on the stone wall and made fun of everything he saw, — all those big animals!

"First came Mr. Lion, the great king of all the animals, walking in front, very high and very grand. Bobtail tossed his head and said Mr. Lion's hair was too bushy.

"Next came a beautiful black horse, and Bobtail said *his* eyes were too big.

"Next came Mr. Camel, and Bobtail said *his* hump was too high.

"And next came Mrs. Cow, and Bobtail said *her* horns were too crooked.

"Next came Mr. Fox, and Bobtail said his tail was too bushy.

"And so he said something unkind about all the animals he saw in the parade. But at the end of the parade came Mr. Elephant. You know what a big fellow he is, and what a long trunk he has. He came tramp, tramp, tramp, at the very end of the circus parade, swinging his long trunk from side to side. And guess what was riding upon Mr. Elephant's back! Why, a man, and a woman, and a dog, and a parrot, and a cat, — all of these things, — and Bobtail said something about every one of them!

"But all the others who were watching the parade thought Mr. Elephant was very large and strong to carry so many on his back, and they said: 'Only see what beautiful large ears Mr. Elephant has! What fine large feet! What — '

"'Pshaw!' said Bobtail, 'I don't call Mr. Elephant big. His ears look like old cabbage leaves, and his little old short tail is

"BOBTAIL STOOD UP ON THE STONE WALL."

not so large as mine. I don't call Mr. Elephant so wonderful! I 'm smarter than Mr. Elephant is!'

"Mr. Elephant heard Bobtail saying all those ugly things, so he just reached out his great long snout, and before Bobtail could wink his eyes Mr. Elephant grabbed him up, and shook him and shook him and shook him, until all his teeth rattled. And then the big cat jumped off Mr. Elephant's back and said, 'Give him to me, Mr. Elephant, give him to me!'

"I 'm glad Mr. Elephant was kind and said 'No,' because you know what that cat would have done to Bobtail. But Mr. Elephant said: 'Never mind, maybe Bobtail will stop now, — anyway, I 'll let him go this time, but he 'd better watch out!'

"Then Mr. Elephant gave Bobtail another big shake, and tossed him away up in the air,

— higher than the tail of a kite, — and when he came down again, — well, you never did hear Bobtail make fun of anything else! And that is the end of my tale," said Mr. Blackrat.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CHEESE HOUSE

"WELL," said Mr. Blackrat, "it is your time to tell a tale now. I 've told mine, and it is n't near time for Mrs. Blackrat to get home from her Anti-Cat Club."

"All right," said Blackie. "I 'll tell you the tale Father Graybeard told Snowwhite and Brownie and Ringtail and me. Once upon a time there was a big white rat named Mrs. Solemncholy, and only guess where she lived!"

"Why, in a log like ours, I suppose," said Mr. Blackrat.

"No, sir," said Blackie. "Mrs. Solemncholy lived in a much better house than we do, because her house was good to eat, — now, guess again."

"Well, then," said Mr. Blackrat, "I guess she lived in a cabbage or a watermelon or a pumpkin."

"No, sir!" said Blackie, "I shall just have to tell you. Mrs. Solemncholy lived in a whole, big, round cheese house."

"Goodness me!" said Mr. Blackrat, "that was a fine house for a rat. Was the lady rat very happy, living in such a fine cheese house?"

"No," said Blackie, "that was the sad part of it, Father Graybeard said. Mrs. Solemncholy was n't a bit happy; she would n't have anything to do with any other rat; she would n't speak to them even, and said she felt so sad, she would just stay in her house all the time, and not do a thing but say her prayers — and eat.

"Why, Father Graybeard said Mrs. Solemncholy ate out all the inside of her house, until she gnawed out a parlor and a bed-

room, and a kitchen, and a dining-room, and a big front window, and she got so fat!"

"I guess she did," said Mr. Blackrat. "I guess she did, my son; and you say she was n't happy? Why, I never heard of such a thing! — a cheese house, and not happy! My!"

"And one day," said Blackie, "Mrs. Solemncholy was sitting by her front window looking out, when she saw three big soldier rats marching by to cat war, and they had their knapsacks, and drums, and big guns. They were very hungry, because they had not had anything to eat in three whole days, — not even a crumb! So they stopped and said: 'Please, Mrs. Solemncholy, would you give us a bite of cheese? We are marching off to cat war, to drive the cats from our land, and we have n't a thing to eat in our knapsacks, — only spare us a crumb of your nice cheese.'"

"Well, of course she invited them in and gave them some," said Mr. Blackrat.

"No, she did n't," said Blackie; "she only cried: 'Boo–hoo, boo–hoo! I have n't a thing to spare. I 'm a poor widow rat, living all by myself, and I don't have anything to do with other rats and cats, — I just say my prayers all the time! Boo–hoo! Boo–hoo–hoo!' And then she shut down her window and went inside."

"Pshaw, pshaw, pshaw!" said Mr. Blackrat. "Why, it makes me sick! I never heard of such a stingy old rat, — living in a *cheese* house, and could n't even spare a bite to starving soldier rats! My, I 'm glad she is n't any of my kinfolks — pshaw, pshaw! The cat ought to eat her!"

"Well, anyway, that 's the story," said Blackie. "Father Graybeard read it in a book, and *he* knows."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Blackrat, "pshaw! pshaw! Come, and let's go to bed, my son! Scramble up on my back, and I'll ride you in. Such a tale and such a rat!"

CHAPTER XV

MRS. GRASSHOPPER GAY

IN the same field with Blackie lived Mrs. Grasshopper Gay. And Mrs. Grasshopper Gay did not like to work. She said it soiled her fingers, and rumpled her pretty green dress, and made her so *very* tired, — silly Mrs. Grasshopper Gay! So she only sang and danced the long day through, and begged everybody who passed to sing and dance with her.

"Why work, anyway?" said Mrs. Grasshopper Gay. "The sun is bright, the sky is blue, and the fields are full of flowers, — come, dance, and let us have a merry time."

"Dancing may be a very pleasant thing," said Mrs. Buzzing-Bee, "but the summer

will not last forever, Mrs. Grasshopper Gay, — neither do sunshine and blue skies, — so I have my work to do! Buzz, buzz, buzz! I must gather nectar juice for honey, and pollen for bread, and then when the winter time comes my queen and the baby bees will have plenty to eat, — you 'd better work, too."

But Mrs. Grasshopper Gay only shook her head and laughed. She said she did not believe there was any such thing as winter, anyway, and if Mrs. Buzzing-Bee chose to work she could, but *she* would n't! No, indeed!

In a big hollow tree near by lived a family of merry squirrels, and Mrs. Grasshopper Gay invited them to come down and dance with her.

"What," said Mrs. Bushytail, "dance the summer away?
Why, who will take care of my children in winter, I pray?
No, indeed, Mrs. Grasshopper Gay,
You don't catch me wasting time in any such way!"

So Mrs. Bushy-tail turned her back, and began gathering nuts to keep for the cold winter time.

Still, Mrs. Grasshopper Gay would not work. She tossed her head, and said: —

"I do not like to play
With squirrels, anyway;
But maybe Mrs. Thrifty-Ant,
Will be glad to dance and play."

But, bless you! Mrs. Thrifty-Ant would not *think* of such a thing. She smoothed out her tiny apron and peered at Mrs. Grasshopper Gay over the rim of her

specs, and then she said: "What do you take me for? Why, I have work to do! It will keep me busy the whole summer through. I have a great many children to feed, and they get hungry in winter as well as in summer. No, indeed, I have no time to dance."

So Mrs. Thrifty-Ant picked up a crumb of bread much larger than herself and tugged away with it into her home.

Mrs. Grasshopper Gay had to dance by herself, because everybody else had work to do.

But the winter time came. Yes, indeed, that very thing happened, much to the surprise of Mrs. Grasshopper Gay And she was n't ready for it, either. And she got so cold! And not one crumb of bread did she have to eat, — nothing, not even a grain of sugar, nor a drop of nectar juice.

"What shall I do?" said Mrs. Grasshopper Gay. "The cold makes me so stiff

I can hardly hop a step! Beg? Why, I do not like to beg! What shall I do?"

But something had to be done, because it began to snow; and Mrs. Grasshopper Gay hurried over to the tree where the bushy-tailed squirrels lived, and knocked and knocked at their door, but no one came to see what she wanted.

Then she went to the hive where Mrs. Buzzing-Bee lived, and knocked and knocked and knocked, but no one came to the door to see what she wanted, and Mrs. Grasshopper Gay turned away.

There was only one more place to try, so she hopped over to Mrs. Thrifty-Ant's and knocked with a loud rap, tap, tap.

"What will you have?" said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant, opening a wee little crack in her door.

"Something to eat, please,—only a grain of wheat," said Mrs. Grasshopper Gay. "I

will be sure to pay you back, — upon my word and honor!"

"No," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant. "I 'm very sorry for you, but I have only enough for my own family. How did you spend your summer? You danced and sang. *I* worked, you see. Good-bye, Mrs. Grasshopper Gay."

Then she shut her door tight. Of course that was n't a very kind thing to do, but then, you see Mrs. Grasshopper Gay just would not work; she only wanted to dance and play, and everybody *told* her the winter time would come.

I don't know what would have become of Mrs. Grasshopper Gay if dear little Blackie had not seen her. He let her sleep in a crack of his log house, and gave her something to eat, and when the summer time came again Mrs. Grasshopper Gay worked, — she did n't dance but *half* the day, and she and Mrs. Bushytail and Mrs. Buzzing-Bee and

Mrs. Thrifty-Ant all grew to be the best of friends.

And they all worked together. That was the best way.

Don't you think so?

CHAPTER XVI

MRS. THRIFTY-ANT'S FALL

EARLY one morning Mrs. Thrifty-Ant went blackberry hunting, and she carried her three smallest children, — Reddy, Brighteyes, and Busybody.

They found some very fine juicy berries hanging over the side of the brook, and Mrs. Thrifty-Ant said: "Now, children, do be careful and don't fall in. The juice of these berries will be fine for jelly, and we will carry home all we can." So up the bush they climbed, one behind the other, and after eating all they wished, started home with some to store away for winter.

"Be careful, children, and don't fall in the water," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant; and just as all three reached the ground safely, Mrs.

Thrifty-Ant did the very thing she told the children not to do, — tumbled over into the water, basket and all!

"Oh–o," said Reddy, "mother 's tumbled into the water!"

"Oh–o," said Busybody, "what shall we do?"

"Help her out," said Brighteyes. But though they tried their very best, they could n't, and Mrs. Thrifty-Ant kept calling: "Help, help, the water is getting into my eyes! Help!"

Jacky Limbo was very near. He was the farmer's son. But Jacky did n't hear, because he was so busy making a bow and arrow he could n't hear anything.

But though Jacky did not hear, a pretty white dove did. She had flown down to the brook to get a sip of cool water, and she heard Mrs. Thrifty-Ant and Brighteyes and Reddy and Busybody calling, "Help, help, help!"

"Wait a moment," said the pretty white dove; "do not be afraid. I think I can help you."

So she flew swiftly up to a tree, and soon came back with a long leaf in her mouth, which she dropped into the water close to Mrs. Thrifty-Ant.

"There is a little bridge," she said; "crawl on that, Mrs. Thrifty-Ant, and you can soon reach the land."

So Mrs. Thrifty-Ant struggled up on the leaf and soon reached the shore where Reddy and Busybody and Brighteyes stood waiting for her.

"Oh–o, mother, do you think you 'll catch a cold?" said Reddy.

"I guess not," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant; "you children come help me rub off. To think that I should do the very thing I told you not to do; tut, tut, tut! Too bad, too bad! Where is the kind dove who helped me out? I wish to thank her for saving my

life. I most surely would have drowned had she not brought the leaf." But the pretty white dove was nowhere to be seen. She had flown away before Mrs. Thrifty-Ant had time to thank her.

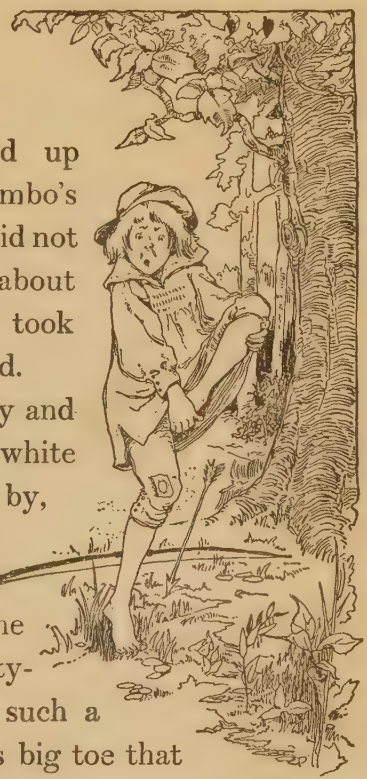
"Anyway, I will help her some day, if I can," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant; and, sure enough, just the very next week Mrs. Thrifty-Ant was in the woods hunting berries again, and she passed Jacky Limbo with his bow and arrow.

Jacky was out looking for something to shoot. I'm sure I don't know why he didn't make a target. And Mrs. Thrifty-Ant heard Jacky say: "I am going to wait here by this tree until the white dove passes, and I'll shoot her when she flies to the brook for water."

"There now," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant, "that must be the very same white dove that helped me get out of the water when I fell in, and to think Jacky Limbo wants

to kill her! Tut, tut! I'll just see about that."

So she crawled up close to Jacky Limbo's foot, when Jacky did not know anything about it, and there she took her seat and waited.



Sure enough, by and by the beautiful white dove came flying by, and just as Jacky Limbo raised his bow to pull the arrow, Mrs. Thrifty-Ant gave him such a sharp sting on his big toe that Jacky Limbo dropped his bow and arrow in a hurry and danced all around the tree, saying, "Oh, oh, oh! Oh, my toe!" And while he was saying, "Oh, oh, oh!" the

pretty white dove was flying fast away, and she was soon snug in her nest with all the baby doves.

"There now," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant, "I 'll keep a watch out on you, Jacky Limbo, and when I *can't*, Reddy or Busybody or Brighteyes will! You sha'n't shoot that pretty white dove with your bow and arrow. I 'll see about that!"

Then she picked up her basket and hurried along, so glad because she had saved the white dove's life.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WAX HOUSE

MR. BUZZING-BEE and all the other buzzing-bees made a most beautiful wax house. It had over a hundred rooms in it, and it was very wonderful. Some of the rooms were bedrooms, where the bees slept, and some of the rooms were nurseries, where the baby bees were kept, and some of the rooms were pantries, where the honey and bread were kept. So they were all proud of their pretty wax house.

But one day all of the bees went off on a picnic and stayed all day long, and at night when they came home again, so tired and sleepy they could hardly fly, what do you think had happened? They could n't

get into their pretty wax house. The hornets said it belonged to them, and Mr. Hornet and all his family had moved in and locked up the doors and windows, and would not let the bees in.

How would you like to go out on a picnic some day and come home and find some one had moved into *your* house, and claimed it for his very own? Well, that 's just what happened to those bees, and though Mr. Buzzing-Bee kept saying over and over again: "It *is* our house. We made it. It is our own wax house, and we made the honey and the bread in the pantries," why, the hornets kept saying: "We won't get out! We won't get out! It 's our house now! It 's our house! We are going to have it!"

Well, of course, if people just won't do the right way, sometimes we have to make them do the right way. So that is the way it was with the hornets. All of the

bees went to Judge Wasp and told him about it.

It was night when they went to Judge Wasp's house, and he came to the door in his nightcap; and when he heard about the trouble he said: "You bees and hornets meet me in the flower garden early to-morrow morning. I 'll find out who that house belongs to then."

So here they all came at the break of day, — the bees, the wasps, the hornets, the flies, and even Mrs. Thrifty-Ant and Mrs. Grasshopper Gay were there, — to see what Judge Wasp would do to settle the trouble.

Judge Wasp was a very wise fellow, so he straightened out his long coat-tails and said, with a low bow: "Attention, ladies and gentlemen! Let us settle this quarrel as quickly as possible. Whose wax house is this I hear so much about?"

And the hornets said, "It 's ours!"

And the bees said, "It 's ours!"

"It can't belong to both," said Judge Wasp. "Whose is it, I say?"

And the hornets said, "It 's ours!"

And the bees said, "It 's ours!"

"Tut, tut!" said Judge Wasp, "somebody is telling a story. We will see. Come, right now, where the eyes of this honorable court can watch you; let the hornets and the bees go to work, — the wax house shall belong to those who can make a piece of wax just like it, with honey in the cells!"

"Good!" said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant. "Good! What a wise judge we have!"

Then the bees went merrily to work, and soon had made a beautiful piece of honeycomb, filled with clover-blossom honey.

But what do you think those hornets did? No, they did not know how to make wax houses filled with honey, — only the bees can do that! So, one by one, they all slipped

away into the woods and *hid*, ashamed for Judge Wasp to see their faces.

Then the bees went back to their pretty wax house, where they lived happily ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XVIII

MR. RABBIT'S EARS

ONE morning, while Mr. Lion was out in the woods sleeping, a cow hooked him. It made him very cross indeed, — so cross that Mr. Lion said that every animal that had *horns* had to leave the woods, and never come back any more.

So the stags had to go, and the rams had to go, and the goats had to go, and the deer had to go, and the cows and the calves, and everything else that had even a piece of a horn had to go, and they ran and ran and ran, because Mr. Lion was king, and all the animals had to obey him.

Now, you know Mr. Rabbit, don't you? Has he any horns? None that I ever saw;

but Mr. Rabbit has very long ears, you know, and when he was walking along he saw the shadow of his ears on the ground, and it frightened him so that he thought they were really *horns*, and how he did run down the big road! Blickerty, blickerty, blick, went Mr. Rabbit down the big road, just as fast as he could run.

By and by he passed little Mr. Cricket sitting on a blade of grass. "Hello! Hello, there!" said Mr. Cricket. "Mr. Rabbit, why are you running away so fast? Stop, and tell me about it."

"Oh, oh!" said Mr. Rabbit, "have n't you heard about Mr. Lion? A cow hooked him, and it made him so cross he said everything that had horns had to leave the country; and — and — and — "

"Well, I don't see why *you* have to run, Mr. Rabbit; you have no horns!"

"No, I know I have n't," said Mr. Rabbit, "but my ears are so long I am afraid some-

body will *think* I have horns and tell Mr. Lion, and — and — and — "

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Cricket, laughing until his sides ached. "What a goose you are, Mr. Rabbit; who ever heard of anybody taking ears for horns? I don't believe Mr. Lion would hurt you even if you did

have horns. He is just in a bad humor, and by to-morrow he will forget all about horns. Don't run away!"

But Mr. Rabbit would n't believe a word Mr. Cricket said. "Somebody might think I have horns and tell Mr. Lion, and — and — and — "

But just about that time Mr. Cricket said, "Boo!" and it scared Mr. Rabbit so, he started in a gallop down the road again, blickerty, blickerty, blick, as hard as he could go, and left Mr. Cricket standing in the road laughing.

I suppose poor Mr. Rabbit would have left the country if it had not been for Mrs. Bob White. She happened to be scratching round in the grass, hunting for a safe place to make her nest, when what should she find tucked up underneath the bushes but Mr. Rabbit, his ears bent back as flat as he could get them.

"Goodness me," said Mrs. Bob White,

"Mr. Rabbit, I do believe! Why, how you frightened me, for a minute! What are you doing underneath the bushes? Are you sick, Mr. Rabbit?"

"No," said Mr. Rabbit, trying hard to smile, "I 'm not sick, Mrs. Bob White, — only tired. I 've been running, and crawled under here to rest. Do you think my ears look like horns?"

"Why, no!" said Mrs. Bob White. "I believe you 've lost your senses, Mr. Rabbit. Do you want horns?"

"Oh, no, no!" said Mr. Rabbit, "not for anything! Why, I 'd rather my ears looked like anything else but horns."

Then he told Mrs. Bob White all about Mr. Lion's getting hooked, and saying everything that had horns had to leave the country, and that his ears were so very long he was afraid some one would take them for horns, and that was why he had been running away.

Then Mrs. Bob White laughed and laughed and laughed. "Why, Mr. Rabbit," she said, "I would n't be such a coward! You know Mr. Lion has sense enough to tell ears from horns, even if *you* have n't! Go back home, and don't get frightened until you have something to get frightened about!"

So at last poor Mr. Rabbit crawled out and started home, and to this very day everybody teases Mr. Rabbit about being afraid of his ears.

CHAPTER XIX

JIMMY GNAT

OF course it amused all the other animals very much when they heard about Mr. Rabbit's horns. They thought it was very funny. Even Jimmy Gnat laughed and laughed over it, and asked Mr. Cricket over and over again to tell him all about it.

"Pshaw!" said little Jimmy Gnat, "who would be afraid of Mr. Lion anyway? Not I! — not even if I had a thousand horns! Mr. Lion is proud to have me for a friend, anyway."

Just about that time Mrs. Thrifty-Ant came by, and you know Mrs. Thrifty-Ant did not believe in foolishness, anyway; and so, when she heard little Jimmy Gnat talk-

ing so big about not being afraid of Mr. Lion, she said: "Take care, take care, little Jimmy Gnat! I've heard little things like you talk before, and you are not so smart as you think you are. You'd better watch out!"

"I'm smarter than you," said little Jimmy Gnat. "I guess I can fly in the air. I guess I can fly through the window and eat dinner at the queen's table any day I choose. And I guess I can sit on the king's lap, too, and, just as I said, Mr. Lion is glad and proud to know me, too!"

Then little Jimmy Gnat swelled himself out, and felt so very big that you hardly knew him.

"Well, good-bye," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant. "I haven't time to fuss, — that doesn't gather up my winter's food, so I must get to work; but little gnats should not feel too big, you know. Good-bye!"

And then she went away.

"Suppose you call on Mr. Lion, and make him a visit," said Mr. Cricket. "He is such a fine friend of yours, go ask after his health, and tell him about Mr. Rabbit."

"All right," snapped little Jimmy Gnat. "I 'm not afraid." And away he flew, feeling very proud of his swelled-up self.

Mr. Lion was lying on the grass sunning when Jimmy Gnat got there, and though he flew and flew around him, singing in his large ears, "I 'm little Jimmy Gnat, I 'm little Jimmy Gnat," Mr. Lion did not even wink his eyes.

Then little Jimmy Gnat swelled up as big as possible, and took a seat on Mr. Lion's big paw, — but he was so very small Mr. Lion did not even feel him.

Then Jimmy Gnat crawled up on Mr. Lion's cheek, but still Mr. Lion did not feel him. Then he hopped over on Mr. Lion's nose, but Mr. Lion did not even move his whiskers.

Then Jimmy Gnat called out as loud as he could sing, right in Mr. Lion's ears: "Oh, Mr. Lion, Mr. Lion, just look here! See! See! I 'm little Jimmy Gnat come to visit you, — see, see!"

But still Mr. Lion did not move, — you see Jimmy Gnat's voice was so very small Mr. Lion thought it was a gentle breeze blowing, so he just turned over and went to sleep; and he did not even know that Jimmy Gnat had been to see him!

How Mrs. Thrifty-Ant did laugh when she heard about it! She said she did not know which was funnier, Mr. Rabbit or Jimmy Gnat, — which do you think?

CHAPTER XX

THE WEE BIRDIES

MRS. BOB WHITE was the happiest of little mothers. She and her wee birdies lived together in a lovely nest, hidden away in Farmer Limbo's field, and fine times they had playing " Hide and Seek " in the tall wheat, or nestling together in the snug nest, while their mother talked to them about the things she had seen during the day. They knew about Mr. Rabbit, and piped the softest little twitters, — that is the way the wee birdies laughed.

There was only one thing that worried Mrs. Bob White, and that was her fear that Farmer Limbo would cut his wheat before the wee birdies were large enough to fly

away. She knew that Jacky had a bow and arrow, too, — suppose he should shoot one of her wee birdies! When the wheat was cut, they would have nowhere to hide.

"Anyway," said Mrs. Bob White, "we will not move until we have to. You birdies listen well while I am away, and tell me everything you hear. Keep close to the nest and don't be afraid."

So the wee birdies promised, and each night they told their mother all that had happened while she was away.

One night Mrs. Bob White was very late getting home, and when she got there all the wee birdies rushed out to meet her, twittering and talking all at the same time: —

"Oh, mother, mother! come and let us fly away! We thought you would never come! To-day we heard Farmer Limbo say the wheat was ready to be cut, and he sent Jacky off to tell the neighbors to come

and help him cut it. Oh, mother, we must go quickly!"

But Mrs. Bob White smiled and shook her head. "No hurry, my dears," she said. "If Farmer Limbo has sent for somebody else to cut the wheat, there is no danger, — we will wait a while longer; but listen well to-morrow, and tell me what you hear."

So they nestled again in the safe, snug nest, and listened to the pretty things their mother had to tell them of all she had seen while away. They were never afraid when nestled close to her.

But the very next morning they heard Farmer Limbo talking again, and they could hardly wait for their mother to come home and let them tell her about it.

"Oh, mother, mother, sure enough, we shall have to go now! Only listen: To-day we heard Farmer Limbo tell Jacky the wheat *must* be cut early in the morning, and cut without fail."

"And who did he say would cut it?" asked Mrs. Bob White.

"Why, his own cousins," said the wee birdies. "The neighbors could not come yesterday, and now Farmer Limbo has sent for his cousins, and they are coming early in the morning! Come, mother, come, and let us fly away!"

But Mrs. Bob White only smiled again, as she patted each frightened wee birdie on the head. "Don't be afraid, little ones," she said; "if Farmer Limbo has only sent for his *cousins* to cut the wheat for him, we need not fear. We are safe, at least for another day."

But the next morning the baby birds did not want their mother to leave them at all, and she had hardly gotten out of their sight before Farmer Limbo came into the field. He stopped very near their nest, and the wee birdies did not speak one word, but nestled up very close to one another and

kept as still as still could be, and only listened.

"Jacky Limbo," they heard the farmer say, "this wheat is ready to be cut! I shall not wait for my neighbors nor my cousins to cut it. I shall cut this wheat *myself*, very early in the morning!"

My! you should have heard the hubbub those wee birdies made that night, when they crowded round Mrs. Bob White. She could hardly hear her own voice. "And who did he say would cut the wheat *this* time?" she said. "Tell me just what you heard."

"Why, mother, Farmer Limbo said he was not going to wait for his neighbors or his cousins; he would cut the wheat *himself!*"

"Well, well," said Mrs. Bob White, "then indeed we must fly away; for the way to get a thing done is to do it yourself, and Farmer Limbo knows that, so

he will cut the wheat himself, just as he says."

Then Mrs. Bob White and all the wee birdies spread their brown wings and flew away. And the wheat was cut the very next day.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WEE BIRDIES' NEIGHBORS

"WHERE are we going, mother?" said the wee birdies, as they flew along. "Will we ever find a new home?"

"Oh, yes, little ones, to be sure we will," said Mrs. Bob White. "Why, for more than three days I have been hunting a safe new home for my birdlings, since I knew the time would come when we must fly from Farmer Limbo's field. I know you will like your new home, too. It is deep in the shady swamp, and there is a deep water brook that runs below, with waving grass and ferns and flowers, — just everything to make a wee birdie happy! Then you will have neighbors, too; Mr. Heron and the nightingale

live close by, and they will be kind to you when I am away."

So on and on they flew, until at last the beautiful swamp was reached, and each wee birdie chirped: "How pretty, mother dear; we like our new home ever so much, and there is no Jacky Limbo here with his bow and arrow to frighten us so when he shoots."

"No, this is a sweet, safe place," said Mrs. Bob White. "Come, nestle here in the leaves close to my side, little ones, and let us rest and sleep."

In the night, when the moon and stars were shining bright, the wee birdies waked up. They heard some one singing the *sweetest* song, and they wondered and wondered who could be singing so late in the night. "Tell us, mother, who it is," said the wee birdies; "it is such a very sad song."

"Hush, little ones, and listen," said Mrs. Bob White; "it is a sad song, but a beau-

tiful one, and I hope you will hear it often. It is the nightingale I told you about. Other birds sing in the daytime, but the nightingale sings only at night Once she had a very great trouble, they say, and she cannot forget about it. That is why her song is sad, and she lives alone in the woods. Everybody has begged her to leave the deep woods where all is so still and quiet, and come nearer the city to live. Then the merry children can listen to her song, and perhaps she will forget about her trouble."

"We have trouble, too, don't we, mother?" said the wee birdies.

"Yes, yes, to be sure," said Mrs. Bob White. "I guess every one has some trouble, and the best way to do is to try to forget about it. Now, shut your eyes and go to sleep again. Maybe we can help the pretty nightingale to forget her trouble by and by, and fly again to the towns and

cities where the people live and can hear her beautiful song."

"And Jacky Limbo?"

"Yes, and Jacky Limbo, too," said Mrs. Bob White. "Surely Jacky would not shoot a bird with a beautiful song like the nightingale's!"

The next morning the wee birdies were wide awake before the sunbeams came to see them. They had taken their bath in the brook, and had found fresh berries for breakfast, and were seated on the limb of a tree playing "swinging," when they saw their other neighbor, Mr. Heron, pass by.

Now Mr. Heron was the queerest bird the wee birdies had ever seen. He was a great long-legged fellow, with the longest neck and the longest bill that ever those wee birdies saw, and they sat very close together on the limb.

"Morning, morning, morning," said Mr. Heron, holding up one of his long legs as

he spoke. "Morning, little neighbors; and how is your mother to-day?"

"She is well," said the wee birdies; "and how are you?"

"Fine, fine, fine!" said Mr. Heron. "I 'm just going out fishing. Ever seen anybody fish? Well, I 'm the finest fisherman in the whole world, — just watch me catch a fish!"

So Mr. Heron stepped splash into the brook, while the wee birdies bent their brown heads to watch, for they had never seen any one go fishing before, and they thought it was very funny.

Mr. Heron stood still in the deep water, watching, and by and by a tiny minnow swam by. "I won't catch that minnow," said Mr. Heron; "he is too little. Wait."

Next a pretty silver fish swam by, but Mr. Heron shook his head. "No," he said, "that little fish is too slim;

he will not do for me either. Just wait a minute."

Next a speckled perch swam by, but even then Mr. Heron shook his head. "That little perch is too flat," he said. "I will watch for a big fat trout. Wait."

"You had better not wait too long, Mr. Heron," said the wee birdies, swinging low; "all the fishes will pass by before you know it, and you won't catch any at all."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Heron, "*you* don't know how well I can fish. Just watch."

But, though Mr. Heron stood very still and watched his very best, no more little fish swam by that morning, and so he did not catch a single one.

"Too bad, too bad, too bad," said Mr. Heron, looking slyly up at the wee birdies; "too bad that after all my bragging I did not catch a single fish! It is just as you wee birdies told me, 'a fellow had better

catch what he can get, and not wait for something larger.' Next time I shall know better. Good-bye."

And then he walked grandly away, with great, high, long steps.

CHAPTER XXII

MR. FOX AND HIS DINNER PARTY

MR. FOX lived in the same woods where the wee birdies lived, and he was always trying to play a joke on somebody just for fun, or to have a good time and a big laugh.

One day he thought he would play a joke on Mr. Heron, so he invited Mr. Heron to come and take dinner with him. The wee birdies were hopping on the grass when Mr. Heron passed, stepping so high and grand.

"Morning, morning, morning, my dears," said Mr. Heron. "I have n't time to talk with you this morning. I am going out to dine with Mr. Fox, you know, and I must n't be late, my dears." Then he

stepped on down the path that led to the rock house where Mr. Fox lived.

He tapped on the door three times with his long, long bill, and Mr. Fox said: "Come right in, Mr Heron, and have a seat. Dinner will be ready in a moment."

And then Mr. Fox laughed and laughed and laughed.

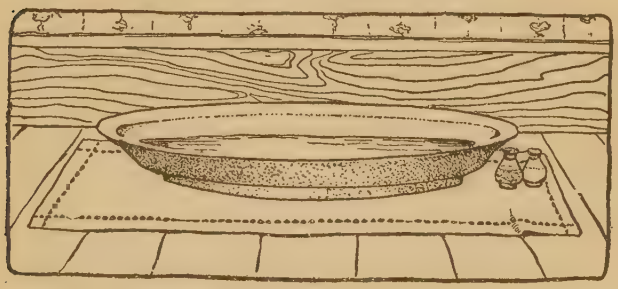
After a while the dinner bell rang, and then Mr. Fox laughed again, and he said: "Come right out to dinner, Mr. Heron; things do smell very nice."

And then he laughed again.

Mr. Heron did not see anything funny, so he did not laugh; but he stepped out to the dining-room and sat down to the table with Mr. Fox.

Guess what Mr. Fox had for dinner! You can't, so I will tell you. He had soup for dinner, and he nearly cracked his sides laughing, because the soup was in a round shallow china plate so very flat that poor Mr.

Heron could not get even a taste, because, you know, his bill was so long and slim. Mr. Fox thought that was very funny indeed, and he laughed and laughed and laughed, and then he lapped up all the soup himself, and then he laughed again.



But Mr. Heron did n't get angry and say ugly things to Mr. Fox; he tried to be very polite, and even laughed a little bit himself, and after dinner he said good-bye, and walked grandly away.

When he reached home he sat on one leg a long time, and thought and thought and thought very hard. Then he smiled and nodded his head and said: —

"Yes, I think I shall play a joke on Mr. Fox this time, and show him how it feels to be laughed at, — maybe Mr. Fox does n't know."

Then he shut his eyes and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. HERON'S DINNER PARTY

EARLY one morning Mr. Heron wrote a note to Mr. Fox and sent it by the wee birdies. It was an invitation to dinner, and Mr. Fox sent word that he was glad to get it, and he would be sure to come. He smacked his lips when he thought about the good dinner he was invited to, because Mr. Heron always had nice things to eat.

So Mr. Fox took his bath and combed out his tail and smoothed his hair, and went trotting through the woods to Mr. Heron's house.

"Morning, morning, morning!" said Mr. Heron. "Walk right in. I do hope you are real hungry, for I have a nice dinner, — the very thing I knew you would like."

Mr. Fox felt so happy about the nice dinner that he just had to laugh, but he did not know Mr. Heron was going to play a joke on *him*. No, indeed, not even the wee birdies knew that. By and by the dinner bell rang and Mr. Heron said: "Walk right out to dinner, Mr. Fox. I hope you will enjoy it. Things smell nice." And then Mr. Heron smiled.

Now guess what Mr. Heron had for dinner? Soup. Just soup; and it was in a long glass bottle like this. And Mr. Heron could get his long slim bill down in the bottle very well, but Mr. Fox could n't even get a wee little taste, and he felt so

ashamed he did not know what to say, because he remembered that was the very way he treated Mr. Heron; and now Mr. Heron had played the same joke on him.

He didn't feel one bit like laughing, because he couldn't even get a taste of soup, for how could his big flat tongue get into that long-necked bottle, though Mr. Heron's long bill could reach to the very bottom?

"You see," said Mr. Heron, "it isn't so very funny, after all, to be invited out to dinner and not be able to eat anything, and then get laughed at. Rude jokes are never funny, Mr. Fox, and as you did not seem to know, I invited you out to teach you. I hope you have enjoyed my dinner as much as I did yours."

Mr. Fox did not say anything, but he turned and twisted, and twisted and

turned, and very soon he said "good-bye" to Mr. Heron and trotted off home.

Things did not seem so funny to Mr. Fox *that* time.

CHAPTER XXIV

MR. FOX AND THE TURKEY TREE

AS Mr. Fox went trotting home from Mr. Heron's dinner party, he felt very hungry, and wondered where he could find something to eat.

Mr. Wolf had told him that Jacky Limbo had a tree growing at his house with four turkeys on it, and that if he went there in the moonlight he would find them, though he must watch out for Jacky Limbo's dog or he might get bitten.

Mr. Fox was so afraid of dogs he would run if he even saw the shadow of one. Anyway, Mr. Fox wanted a turkey off that turkey tree, so he waited until the moon was very bright, and then he started out.

Sure enough, it was just as Mr. Wolf had said, — there was the tree by the garden fence, and there were the four fat turkeys on the tree, though I do not think they were growing there.

"Good evening," said Mr. Fox. "I have come to invite one of you to go home and spend the night with me. Which one wants to go?"

"Not I!" said the two fattest turkeys. "No, indeed, Mr. Fox; we have been hearing about you and your tricks. We have n't any idea of going home with you."

"Better come," said Mr. Fox. "I 've got a fine corn patch growing there."

"Maybe you have," said the fattest turkeys, "but it is n't for us, Mr. Fox; we get all the corn we want at Jacky's house."

Then Mr. Fox was angry and said: "I 'll climb that tree and shake you down if you don't come!"

Then all the turkeys laughed, because

everybody knew Mr. Fox did not know how to climb a tree.

Then Mr. Fox tried some of his tricks. He lay down on the grass and played that he was dead; but still the turkeys laughed, and would not come down.

Then Mr. Fox jumped up and played that his tail was a flame of fire, and said he was going to burn that tree down; but that did n't scare the turkeys either, and they laughed and laughed.

Then Mr. Fox ran off into the woods and hid behind a stump. He thought surely the turkeys would come down then, because they would think he had gone home; but no, sir, those turkeys had too much sense for that, so they stayed up in the tree, and even took a little nap.

After a while Mr. Fox came tripping back. He thought he had a new trick to fool those turkeys this time, so he said: "Halloo, turkeys; I have just hurried back to tell you the good news. Mr. Lion says he wants all the animals in the world to be good friends now, and do only kind things to one another. Come, hurry down the tree and shake hands with me, and let us be good friends forever and ever!"

"Good!" said the fattest turkeys, "that is good news; and look! look! Yonder come Jacky Limbo's dogs, to make friends with us, too."

"Dogs? dogs?" said Mr. Fox; "really

I have n't a minute to stay; I must hurry on with my news!"

And away went Mr. Fox, scampering down the road, just as fast as he could go, — blickerty, blick! blickerty, blick, blick! You see he was so afraid of those dogs.

How those turkeys did laugh! "We fooled him that time!" said the fattest turkey. "Mr. Fox won't come back to this tree soon."

And then they shut their eyes and went to sleep.

And Mr. Fox went to bed without any supper.

CHAPTER XXV

MR. FOX AND MR. THOMAS CAT

THE next morning Mr. Fox got up very early.

It was Saturday, and Mr. Fox always went to market on Saturday, you know. So he took his little round purse full of money and tied it on the end of his big walking-stick and started out through the woods, — tramp, tramp, tramp, went Mr. Fox through the woods, with his big walking-stick.

Mr. Thomas Cat was going to market, too, that morning, and he had his purse tied on the end of a stick, and he was going tramp, tramp, tramp, through the woods, just like Mr. Fox.

So they tramped on together until they reached the market. Mr. Fox bought candy

and chewing-gum with his money, and Mr. Thomas Cat bought chestnuts with his money, and then they started home again.

Mr. Fox felt so very jolly that he talked and talked about himself, and how many tricks he knew. He told how he fooled the turkeys, — but he did n't tell how the turkeys fooled him. And he told how he fooled Mr. Heron, — but he did not say one word about how Mr. Heron fooled him.

"Why," said Mr. Fox, "I know more tricks than anybody in the world! I guess I know a hundred tricks!"

"Well," said Mr. Thomas Cat, "I do not know a hundred tricks, Mr. Fox, but I know one trick, and it is a very fine one. It is better than all your hundred tricks put together."

"It is n't! It is n't! It is n't!" said Mr. Fox. "You don't know any tricks half so good as mine!"

But just at that minute Jacky Limbo's dogs came yelping through the woods, and Mr. Thomas Cat said: "Watch me play my trick," and up the tree he went like a flash.

Well, of course Mr. Fox could not climb a tree, — you know that, — and so he fell down on the ground and played that he was dead. But he could n't fool Jacky Limbo's dogs, — they knew a dead fox from a live one, — so they grabbed Mr. Fox by the tail and held him tight until Jacky Limbo came up.

"This is the very old fox that tried to catch our turkeys, and played that his tail was a blaze of fire, and made out that he was dead, and ever so many other tricks," said Jacky Limbo. "Why, I 'd rather know how to climb a tree than to know all of Mr. Fox's tricks."

And Mr. Thomas Cat, away up in the tree, heard what Jacky said, and he said to

himself: "I told Mr. Fox my one trick was better than all of his tricks put together. Now, I guess he will believe me."

Well, I don't know what Jacky did with Mr. Fox, but I think he sold him to the circus man, and maybe some day you will see him marching in the circus parade.

CHAPTER XXVI

MR. THOMAS CAT'S CHESTNUTS

THE first thing Mr. Thomas Cat did, after he reached home, was to roast his chestnuts for dinner. He scraped out a nice place in the ashes, and, just as he had his chestnuts nicely covered over, there came a rap, tap, tap, at his door; and when Mr. Thomas Cat opened it, in walked Mr. Monkey, with a big new cravat on.

"Good morning, Mr. Thomas Cat; it seems to me I smell something good cooking," said Mr. Monkey, sniffing in the air with his queer nose. "My, it smells *so* good, Mr. Thomas Cat! Is it oranges?"

"No," said Mr. Thomas Cat, "it is n't oranges."

"Then it must be apples," said Mr. Monkey.

"No, it is n't apples," said Mr. Thomas Cat.

"Then it must be nuts," said Mr. Monkey. "Oh, Mr. Thomas Cat, it smells just like chestnuts, — are n't you roasting chestnuts for dinner? Who showed you how to roast chestnuts, Mr. Thomas Cat? You do it better than anybody in the whole world! I wish I knew how to roast such nice chestnuts, — I wonder how they taste, Mr. Thomas Cat?"

"I don't know," said Mr. Thomas Cat, smiling. But he felt so proud because Mr. Monkey said he roasted the best chestnuts in the whole world that he did n't know what to do. Mr. Monkey watched a while longer, and then he said: "Why, Mr. Thomas Cat, you have such beautiful, b–e–a–u–t–i–f–u–l claws! They must know how to do all kinds of things. How do you

get your chestnuts out of the ashes when they are done? Do you use a spoon?"

"Why, no," said Mr. Thomas Cat, feeling prouder than ever because Mr. Monkey said he had such beautiful claws. "How do I get them out? Why, I just scratch them out with my claws."

"With your beautiful claws?" said Mr. Monkey. "Why, how smart you are! — I should be sure to burn myself! Show me how!"

Mr. Thomas Cat felt prouder than ever, so he scratched in the ashes, and pulled out a fine chestnut and put it on the hearth to cool.

"My," said Mr. Monkey, "how smart you are!"

Then he gobbled up the chestnut very quickly; but Mr. Thomas Cat did not know it, because he was too proud to see.

"Let me see if you can scratch out another one with your beautiful claws," said

Mr. Monkey. And then he gobbled up that one, too, very quickly. "How smart you are to get them out and not burn yourself! Can you scratch out another one, Mr.

Thomas Cat?" And then Mr. Monkey gobbled up that one, too.

And he kept on praising Mr. Thomas Cat, and telling him how smart he was, until Mr. Thomas Cat became so proud he could n't see, and just as fast as he would scratch out those chestnuts Mr. Monkey

would eat them up, — one by one, until he ate them every one.

And by and by, when Mr. Thomas Cat turned around to count his chestnuts, why, they were all gone!

Now, what do you think of that?

CHAPTER XXVII

MR. EAGLE AND OLD MRS. OWL

JUST as Mr. Lion was king of all the four-footed animals, so Mr. Eagle was king of all the birds, and he was a great big strong fellow, — so strong that he could pick you right up in his claws and fly to a mountain top with you.

Old Mrs. Owl was a big bird, too, with great round eyes, that went to sleep in the daytime and stayed awake at night. She was a very queer bird, and, do you know, she even got up a quarrel with Mr. Eagle, and said that she could fly higher than he could fly!

When Mr. Eagle heard about it, why, he got angry, too, and he fluttered his great strong wings, and said: —

"What 's all this I hear? Who says he can fly higher than I can?"

And then old Mrs. Owl hooted out: "Who? Who? Who? Why, I, to be sure!"

And then Mr. Eagle said, "You can't!" and old Mrs. Owl said, "I can!" and they made such a racket and quarrelled and fussed so much, that all the birds were ashamed of them, and

tucked their heads beneath their wings for shame.

"Something must be done to stop this quarrel," said the pretty white dove. "What shall we do?"

"Why, let them run a race, — a flying race, — and prove which one can fly higher, Mr. Eagle or old Mrs. Owl."

"All right," said the birds, "that will be the very thing, because it is a shame for birds to quarrel!"

Mr. Eagle and old Mrs. Owl both said they would be glad to run the race, and the very next day all the birds gathered together, and I wish you could have seen what a crowd there was!

The air was black with birds, and they sat on stumps and fence rails and old trees, and anything else they could find near the race grounds. They tell me that even Mr. Lion and all the four-footed animals came to see that race.

Mr. Heron was the one to do the counting, so he said, "One, two, three, go!"

And off flew Mr. Eagle and old Mrs. Owl, side by side. But they did not stay side by side long, — no, indeed, — because old Mrs. Owl could not get any further than the high pine tree, and Mr. Eagle, — goodness me, he flew so high, why, it looked as if he flew to the top of the sky, and you could n't see a thing of him but a little black speck, away up yonder!

How those birds did flap their wings and shout! Even old Mrs. Owl came down out of the pine tree, and flapped her wings, too.

So Mr. Eagle won the race, and when he came back everybody shook hands with him, and he and old Mrs. Owl were good friends ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OLD MRS. OWL'S CHILDREN

NOW, you know, when animals have a quarrel, they do not stay angry as some people do. They get glad right away. So, after the race, old Mrs. Owl and Mr. Eagle grew to be such good friends they went to see each other every night, and talked and talked and talked and talked and talked, until Mr. Eagle would get so sleepy he could n't hold his eyes open. Then old Mrs. Owl would say: —

"Sleepy, my dear?
Why, how queer!
I stay awake all night
Until the broad daylight.
Sleepy, my dear?
Why, how queer!"

But one night they almost sat up all night, sure enough, because they began

talking about their children, — what they ate, how they slept, how they walked, how they flew, what they drank, what they wore, where they went, what they said, and all that kind of thing. My! They talked so fast they almost forgot to be polite, and both talked at the very same time. You never heard such a hubbub!

"Did you ever see my children, anyway?" said old Mrs. Owl, looking very wise.

"No, I never did," said Mr. Eagle. "Tell me what they look like."

"Well, they are the most beautiful things in the whole world," said old Mrs. Owl; "you would be sure to know them the minute you saw them.

"They have such wonderfully pretty eyes, — large and soft and brown. Their feathers are like the richest silk of changeable golden color, and their feet are perfect dreams of loveliness! I 'm sure you never saw anything quite so pretty. And their

voices! Why, I have taught them a beautiful song called 'Who,' and they sing together so sweetly: —

'Who? Who? Who?'

Oh, the darlings! If anything should happen to them I don't know what I should do."

"Well, my children are not so very pretty," said Mr. Eagle, "but I should hate to have anything happen to them. Let us promise never to trouble each other's children, — I 'll promise you upon my word and honor."

"And I 'll promise you upon my word and honor," said old Mrs. Owl. Then they both shook hands and said, "Good night."

Well, Mr. Eagle really did mean to keep his promise, but one day he flew into the top of a high pine tree to rest, and while he was scratching around up there he found old Mrs. Owl's children, fast asleep in a

hollow, and they were so very, very ugly, why, Mr. Eagle did not know them!

You know Mrs. Owl had told him how beautiful her children were, what pretty eyes, what pretty feathers, and what lovely feet; and these queer little things didn't have any feathers at all. And their eyes looked like saucers, and their feet were rusty.

"Goodness me!" said Mr. Eagle, "what can these horrid little things be? Why, I never saw such sights! I wonder if they are good to eat? I believe I'll just carry them home and see what my children think of them. They may be good to play with."

So, bless you! Mr. Eagle picked old Mrs. Owl's children right up in his strong claws, and away he flew with them.

And by and by, when old Mrs. Owl came flying home, and couldn't find her children anywhere, she certainly did

cry. She went flying through the woods, screeching: —

"Who? Who? Who?
Who has taken my children away?
Who? Who? Who?
Who has taken my children, I say?"

Mrs. Thrifty-Ant heard her; she never could stand any foolishness, you know, so she said: "Look here, old Mrs. Owl, what 's all that fuss about? Why don't you stop crying and do a little hunting? I know who has your children."

"Who? Who? Who?" wailed old Mrs. Owl. "Tell me who?"

"Then stop screeching and listen to me," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant. "I was crawling up the high pine tree when Mr. Eagle stopped there to rest. He took your children, but he did not know they were yours, because they were so very ugly. *You* told Mr. Eagle your children were beautiful, and how was he to know any better, I 'd like to

know? Mr. Eagle did not know what these little ugly things were, so he carried them home for his children to see. What made you tell such a fib, old Mrs. Owl? Fibs always make trouble."

But old Mrs. Owl did not even stay to answer Mrs. Thrifty-Ant. Away she flew as fast as she could go to Mr. Eagle's, and there she found her four young children, safe and sound.

Mr. Eagle gave them back to her, like the gentleman that he was, and even carried them home again. "You see," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "you said they were beautiful, old Mrs. Owl, and that is why I took them."

CHAPTER XXIX

LITTLE MISS MAGPIE

LITTLE Miss Magpie was a very smart little bird; I could n't begin to tell you how many things she could do! Why, she could see-saw, and she could waltz, and she could jump the rope, and she could wear a tiny harness and pull a tiny cart with tiny paper-dolls all seated inside for a ride. And she would eat from your hand, and light on your shoulder and kiss your cheek, or whisper a secret in your ear.

All these things little Miss Magpie could do, and everybody would have loved her if it had n't been for one thing, and that was that little Miss Magpie was a " tattle-tale." Was n't that dreadful! She just tattled, tattled, tattled all the time. Why, every-

thing little Miss Magpie heard anybody say she would go right off and tell to somebody else, and sometimes she would n't tell it just right, — she would even add something else to it, and then tell it.

Did you ever see a little tattle-tale? Oh, no, not you. Of course you would n't be a tattle-tale, for how could people love you if you were? And then, something sorrowful always happens to tattle-tales, you know, and that 's what happened to little Miss Magpie. I must tell you about it.

One day she thought she would take a summer trip, so she flew and she flew and she flew nearly all day long, and she flew so far that when she started home again, why, she was lost, and could n't find her way home at all.

So she flew around and around and around, so frightened she did not know what to do. At last Mr. Eagle heard her

crying, and came to see what was the matter.

"Tut, tut," said Mr. Eagle, "don't be a cry-baby; come home and live with me. I live away up among the high rocks on the mountain side. It is a beautiful home, and you will have a fine time playing with the baby eagles."

Well, little Miss Magpie thought that would be very nice indeed, — to live on the mountain top with the king of all the birds, — so she dried her tears and flew away with Mr. Eagle; and, sure enough, his home was a very beautiful one. He gave little Miss Magpie something nice to eat, and she played with the baby eagles a long, long time.

Then, after supper, Mr. Eagle said: "Come and talk to me, little Miss Magpie; I am very tired; and show me some of the things you can do." So little Miss Magpie showed Mr. Eagle and the baby

eagles how many things she could do. She cut the pigeon wing, and she waltzed, and

she walked the rope, and she drew the little cart with the ribbon harness, and — oh, my! I can't remember all she did do; and Mr. Eagle laughed and laughed, and the baby eagles laughed and

laughed, and they all were having a very fine time.

"What else can you do?" said Mr. Eagle. "You seem to be a very smart little bird indeed."

"Oh," said little Miss Magpie, "I can do one thing I have n't told you about. It is the thing I do best of all. I can fly all around among the birds and listen to everything they say, and then come tell you about it, — every word."

Mr. Eagle stopped laughing right straight away, and his face looked very queer, and it frightened little Miss Magpie, because she knew then that Mr. Eagle did not like a tattle-tale any more than you and I do.

And the baby eagles looked at one another, too, and they felt so sorry, because they knew Mr. Eagle was not going to let any tattle-tale live in *his* home. And, sure enough, Mr. Eagle said: "Well, little Miss Magpie, if that is the thing you do best of

all, — just tattle, — why, you cannot live with me. I don't have tattle-tales in my house, so you must go right away!"

Dear me, was n't that too bad? But I told you something sorrowful always happened to tattle-tales. So poor little Miss Magpie had to fly away and leave Mr. Eagle's beautiful home, where she had been having such a nice time.

"I 'm going to stop being a tattle-tale," said little Miss Magpie, as she flew along. "I never shall be a tattle-tale any more!"

I wish Mr. Eagle could have heard her say that, don't you? Because I believe if he had he would have called little Miss Magpie back to live with him.

CHAPTER XXX

LITTLE MISS MAGPIE AT MADISON SQUARE

LITTLE Miss Magpie flew on and on, wondering where she would find another home. By and by she saw a twinkling light, then another and another, and she knew the big city could not be very far off.

It was early in the morning when she got to the city, and she was very tired and very hungry, and flew from house to house, searching under the windows and on the porches for crumbs. Surely the children who lived in the houses would throw her a few if they only knew how tired she was, and that she was going to stop being a tattle-tale. You would, would n't you?

At last she came to the big house on Madison Square, — the very house where Blackie and Snowwhite and Brownie and Ringtail lived, — only Blackie had moved to the country, you know.

Little Miss Magpie hopped all around the back porch, and right up on the top step she saw a big crumb of bread, and hopped over to see how it tasted; but just as she stopped to pick it up, the big gray cat, who was napping in the sun, sprang with a bound, and caught poor little Miss Magpie in his sharp claws, and frightened her so she shut her eyes tight and drooped her tiny head on one side.

But when she opened her eyes again, guess what! No, no, the gray cat had n't eaten her, for how could she see if he had? No, not that, but something beautiful had happened instead. Somebody's soft hand held little Miss Magpie gently, — somebody with waving brown curls, and a pair

of laughing gray eyes, — somebody who stroked her feathers gently and said: "You poor little birdie, you! Are you frightened almost to death?"

Of course you have guessed it was Dorothy, — the little mistress of Madison Square. You have n't forgotten Dorothy, have you? And how she saved Blackie's life? Well, she had come up the steps just in time to save little Miss Magpie's life, too, for the gray cat knew no better than to eat her, then.

But when Dorothy shook her head at him, and took the bird and nestled it up to her cheek, talking softly all the while, he knew then that he must never hurt little Miss Magpie, or any bird, and they grew to be the best of friends, often playing together on the broad back porch.

Little Miss Magpie loved her new home so much she would n't go home, even after she got well enough, so Dorothy gave her

a cage whose door was always open, so that little Miss Magpie might go out or in whenever she chose. There were always seeds and fresh water for her, and a dear little bathtub, when she did not choose to go to the fountain for her bath.

She showed Dorothy how she could waltz, and jump the rope, and see-saw, and she would eat from Dorothy's hand, and hop on her shoulder, and kiss her lips and tell her a secret, but she never said one word about being a tattle-tale, and you know Dorothy must have loved her more and more each day.

One morning little Jenny Wren came to see little Miss Magpie, and they were hopping around the porch, when they found a piece of cake.

"It 's mine," said little Jenny Wren.

"No, it 's mine," said little Miss Magpie.

"I found it first," said little Jenny Wren.

"No, I found it first," said little Miss Magpie.

"You sha'n't have it," said little Jenny Wren.

"I shall have it," said little Miss Magpie; and so they fussed and fussed until Dorothy came to the window to see what was the matter. But the gray cat had heard them, too, and he said, "I 'll settle that fuss in a minute!" So guess what he did? Why, he snatched up the crumb of cake and ate it himself, — and then there was n't any cake to fuss over, you see.

CHAPTER XXXI

SNOWFLAKE

SNOWFLAKE was Mrs. Nanny Goat's only child. She favored her mother and was as white as snow. That is why she was called Snowflake. Mrs. Nanny Goat stayed close at home when Snowflake was very young, and nursed and petted her, and told her all the things little lambs should know to make them grow strong and wise.

But one night Mrs. Nanny Goat just had to go to town and leave little Snowflake all by herself, so she barred up all the windows to the little house very tight, and then she called Snowflake to her and said: "Now, Snowflake, listen to what I tell you. I must go to town to-night and

leave you at home by yourself. If any one comes to the door and knocks, be sure you do not open it unless they say, 'You bad old wolf, away, away!'

"You remember the story I told you about little Red Riding Hood and the wolf, so you know they are not very kind friends. If anything should happen to you while I am away it would break my heart, so remember to open the door to no one, unless you hear him say, 'You bad old wolf, away, away!'"

"All right, mother," said little Snowflake, "I will do just as you say; but tell me, before you go, how wolves look, — are they like us?"

"No, no, not a bit like us," said Mrs. Nanny Goat. "The wolves I 've seen about here are all black, and we are all white, you know. Now, I must hurry away; be a good lambkin, and remember what I have said."

So Mrs. Nanny Goat went out and shut

the door up tight, so no one could get in while she was away. But all the time she had been talking to little Snowflake Mr. Wolf was hiding close by the window listening, and he heard every word Mrs. Nanny Goat said when she told Snowflake not to open the door to any one unless they said, "You bad old wolf, away, away!"

So Mr. Wolf waited until Mrs. Nanny Goat got out of sight, and then he laughed and said: "I guess I'll have a fat little lamb to eat for my supper." Then he trotted up and knocked on Mrs. Nanny Goat's door, blim, blim, blim!

Little Snowflake heard, so she said, "Who's there?" And then Mr. Wolf laughed right easy, and said, "You bad old wolf, away, away!" and he felt sure little Snowflake would open the door for him.

But he had such a big rough voice it scared little Snowflake, so she said, "Show

me a white foot first, through the crack, then I will open the door."

You see she remembered what her mother had said about wolves being black, and she waited and waited; but Mr. Wolf did not know what to do then, because he did n't have any white foot; all of his four feet were black, — as black as black could be! So how could he show little Snowflake a white foot through the crack?

He could n't, and he just had to crawl down the steps and go trotting off through the woods, and little Snowflake heard him growling and growling, because he was so very angry.

But I know you are glad little Snowflake was so very careful to remember everything her mother had said, and to ask for the white foot, too, before she opened the door.

By and by Mrs. Nanny Goat came hurrying home, and she smiled and tapped on the door, too, blim, blim, blim! And she heard

little Snowflake say, "Who 's there?" And Mrs. Nanny Goat said, "You bad old wolf, away, away!"

Snowflake said, "That sounds like my own dear mother's voice!" Then, just to be sure, she said, "Show me a white foot through the crack, first."

And, sure enough, when she peeped, there was the white foot; and when she opened the door, why, there was her own dear mother, so glad to get home again. And when Snowflake told her all about the wolf knocking, and what she said to him, Mrs. Nanny Goat laughed and laughed, and said Snowflake was the dearest, smartest little lambkin in all the world!

What do you think about it?

CHAPTER XXXII

FLEETFOOT AND BILLY

"MOTHER," said little Snowflake, after they had nestled close together in bed, "tell me what you saw when you went to town to-night."

"Oh, I saw many, many things," said Mrs. Nanny Goat. "I saw leaves and grass and water and flowers and people, and Mr. Heron and the wee birdies, though they were asleep and did not see me."

"Did you see any wee lambkins?" asked Snowflake.

"At night?" said Mrs. Nanny Goat. "Why, who ever heard of a wee lambkin being out at night? That would never do! But I will tell you what I did see, — two beautiful white goats standing on a narrow

plank across the water, and it made me very sorry, because they were fussing and quarrelling, and even butting each other in a most dreadful manner, — I could see them plainly in the moonlight."

"And what were they fussing about?" asked little Snowflake. "It is n't polite to fuss, is it, mother?"

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Nanny Goat; "and I hope my lambkin will never quarrel over such a little thing as those two goats were quarrelling over. Why, it was just because both of them could not cross the narrow plank over the stream at the same time, and one would not wait until the other passed.

"You see, Billy was coming from town, and Fleetfoot was going to town, and they met right in the middle of the plank.

"'Let me pass!' said Fleetfoot.

"'You let me pass!' said Billy.

"'I won't!' said Fleetfoot.

"'I won't!' said Billy.

"'You 'd better let me pass,' said Fleetfoot; 'my father was a king!'

"'I don't care if he was,' said Billy; 'my father was a king, too.'

"'Let me pass!' said Fleetfoot. 'I 'll butt you if you don't!'

"'Yes, and I 'll butt you, too!' said Billy. 'I 'm better than you!'

"'You are not!' said Fleetfoot.

"'I am!' said Billy; and then they began to fight, and I never saw such butting as those two goats did do, shaking their heads and digging their horns into each other, until all at once I heard a great big s–p–l–a–s–h! and down went Fleetfoot and Billy, over and over into the water below. It was very disgraceful!"

"Oh–o!" said Snowflake, "did they drown?"

"I did not wait to see," said Mrs. Nanny Goat; "the last I saw of them they were

"THEN THEY BEGAN TO FIGHT."

snorting and splashing around, but they were not doing any quarrelling, because they were too busy trying to get out of that stream, and the water was all in their eyes and mouth and ears, and they were having a most dreadful time.

"I think they both wished they had been more polite to each other, and I think they will be next time.

"Now, shut your eyes and go to sleep, little one, for little lambkins must not stay awake at night if they wish to grow wise and strong."

CHAPTER XXXIII

KERCHUNK

YOU haven't forgotten Mr. Bullfrog, who lived in the pond near Blackie, have you? Well, Mr. Bullfrog's youngest brother Kerchunk lived in the very same pond. He was a fat, plump little frog, and he was always puffing himself out to show how large he was.

Why, Kerchunk thought he was the largest thing in the world, and he was always wishing he could travel to the other end of the earth and show everybody what a big fellow he was.

"You are not such a big fellow, after all, Kerchunk," said Mr. Terrapin, "but if you really want to travel, I will lend you my shell to wear. Will you take good care of it?"

"Yes," said Kerchunk, "but how am I going to get a carriage to ride in? There is the great ocean to cross, and no frog can swim across that big water."

"We will carry you," said two pretty white ducks, who came down to the edge of the pond. "We can fly across the ocean, but what will you do for a carriage?"

"Oh," said Mr. Terrapin, "I can fix a carriage with a stick. Let one duck hold one end of the stick and the other duck hold the other end of the stick, and Kerchunk hold on with his mouth to the middle. Won't that be a good carriage?"

"To be sure," said the white ducks and Kerchunk in a breath; "hurry up, and let 's get ready."

So Mr. Terrapin found a strong stick, and the white ducks took each end in their bills, and Kerchunk caught hold in the middle, and off they started.

"Take good care of my shell," said Mr.

Terrapin, as up, up, up, they sailed, "and don't let it get cracked, and be sure to bring it back."

But Kerchunk was so high up and so far away he could n't hear a word Mr. Terrapin was saying; and the white ducks flew so very fast it was all Kerchunk could do to hold on, anyway.

Faster and faster they sailed, farther and farther away, over treetops and housetops and meadows and lakes.

"How wonderful!" thought Kerchunk. "No frog has seen so much as I! Only see how the people on the streets are watching me!"

And, sure enough, all the village people came crowding to the doors and windows to see the wonderful sight. "Why," they said, "what can it be? Maybe it is a fairy queen sailing through the air, drawn in her fairy carriage by wonderful fairy ducks."

"Yes, yes," the others said, "a fairy

queen! It must be a fairy queen, to ride in a wonderful carriage like that!"

Well, Kerchunk saw them watching him, and he heard them calling him a fairy queen, and you know it made him feel so very proud that he swelled bigger and bigger, and then he was so afraid the white ducks would n't know about it that he said, "Listen to them, white ducks!"

But, bless you! when Kerchunk opened his mouth to speak, of course he let go the stick, and my! he tumbled to the ground so fast even the white ducks did not see him fall, as he whirled over and over to the ground. Why, the bump almost knocked his brains out, and what 's more, he cracked Mr. Terrapin's shell right in two! Kerchunk was very sorry about that, but of course he could n't mend it, and he wished very much he had not been so foolish as to think he was ever like a queen.

Mrs. Thrifty-Ant lived right by the spot

where Kerchunk fell, and of course she came to the door to see what jarred the earth.

"Mercy on me," said Mrs. Thrifty-Ant, "what under the sun is this thing tumbling by my house? Why, it is an overgrown tadpole, I do believe! Where did you come from, anyway?"

And then, when Kerchunk told her, why, she laughed and laughed and laughed. "A queen!" she said; "now, would n't you make a beautiful fairy queen? You foolish little frog, you! Hop right home to your mother, and remember that frogs are frogs, and not fairy queens, — ever."

You know Mrs. Thrifty-Ant did not believe in foolishness, anyway.

CHAPTER XXXIV

KERCHUNK'S SISTERS

KERCHUNK hopped along the road home, a very tired little frog. He was sleepy and hungry, and he wished more and more he had not thought himself a queen, when he was only a foolish little frog, as Mrs. Thrifty-Ant had said. When he had almost reached home he met his three sisters. They were hopping away from home as fast as they could go, and all croaking in a very loud voice.

"Oh, Kerchunk," said Spotty, "you can't go home now; we are hopping away for our lives. Come quickly and go with us, or you 'll get mashed flat as a battercake."

"What?" said Kerchunk. "Who said so? Tell me about it."

"Well, hop along, then," said Spotty; "we must n't stop a minute, and I 'll tell you as we go. While we were eating our lunch this afternoon two great big cows, with great big feet and great long horns, came right to the side of our bog. And while they were talking they became very angry with each other, because one of them said the moon was red, and the other one said the moon was green. So they had a big fight about it."

"Well, what if they did?" said Kerchunk, "how can that hurt us? Come, let us go back home. I am so tired!

"Oh, no, no, no," said Spotty, "not for anything! Why, we have n't any home now, Kerchunk!"

"No, we have n't even a piece of a home, now," said the baby, Squatty.

"And we can't ever go there any more," said Greenback.

"No, no, no," said Spotty; "why, the

cows were so angry about the color of the moon that they stepped all over the flowers and grass and mashed them flat in the dirt and water, and pawed up the earth, and splashed dirt in the water; and then one of them ran away, and the other one stayed there and said he never was going to leave, but he was going to live in our bog always and have it for his own home.

"And then he tramped all around again, and almost tramped on Squatty and me, so we hurried away as fast as we could hop. We did n't want her to mash us down flat like a batter-cake, or the flowers and the grass. Oh, it was a dreadful sight!"

"They ruined our pretty home," said Greenback, "just because the moon was n't red."

"And just because the moon was n't green," said Spotty.

"And just because we were so little," said Baby Squatty.

"And I 'm so very, very tired," said Kerchunk. And so the four little frogs went hopping along to find them another bog.

They hopped and hopped and hopped and hopped, and by and by, sure enough, they came to another bog, but there was a great long, black log lying across it, and it scared the little frogs, — Kerchunk and Spotty and Greenback and Baby Squatty, — because they thought the log was a big black cow.

"Oh, sisters, hide quickly," said Kerchunk. "I 'm sure that is the bad cow you 've been talking about!"

"Oh, she will fight us and mash us, too!" said Greenback.

"It is a lion or a big snake," said Baby Squatty. "I think it is n't a cow."

"Maybe it is a growling bear," said Kerchunk, as he peeped over the others. "Run, sisters, let us hide behind the big rock before it bites us."

So all these foolish little frogs scrambled

beneath the rock to hide, as scared as scared could be, all because they thought an old dead log was a cow or a snake or a bear! Would you be afraid of that?

Well, the next morning, when daylight came and the little frogs all peeped out, why, they were so surprised because there was n't any bear there, — nothing but a big black log. Then these four little frogs laughed and laughed, and Kerchunk said: "We are foolish little frogs, that 's what we are! Who ever heard of being afraid of a log!"

Then they all jumped into the bog, and were glad to find such a fine new home.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE SEVEN LITTLE TRAVELLERS

KERCHUNK and his three little sisters enjoyed their new home very much. Spotty said she believed it was even better than the other home had been, because they had the old bear log to play "jumping" and "hiding" on.

They certainly did have a good time playing "hiding," too, and while Kerchunk counted, Spotty and Greenback and Baby Squatty would hide in the mud at the bottom of the pond, and then each would yell, "Knee-deep, knee-deep, knee-deep!" and Kerchunk would look and look until he found them.

But one morning while they were playing hiding what do you suppose they saw hopping down the road? No, it was n't a cow,

because cows don't hop, you know; it was n't Mrs. Grasshopper Gay, either, though she was a very good hopper.

Well, I 'll tell you: It was seven little frogs in a row, and they were talking very fast as they came hopping along, one behind another, — hop, hop, hop, hop, hop!

" Oh," said Spotty, " suppose this is their bog we are living in and they are coming home! It will make them very angry, and then we 'll have to move again."

" Oh–o," said Greenback, " we don't want to leave our funny old bear log."

" No, we don't," said Baby Squatty, and then she tuned up and was about to cry, when the seven little frogs hopped up near them, and said: " Come over to the bank; we have something to tell you. Hurry, hurry! "

Kerchunk was the first one to jump into the water and swim to the bank, where they waited, and soon his three little sisters

jumped in with a splash and crawled up on the grass to hear what the other frogs had to tell.

"It 's about the sun," said the biggest frog. "It is bad news; we only heard it yesterday, and we are hurrying away to tell all the other frogs."

"The sun?" said Kerchunk. "Why, what is the matter with the sun?"

"The sun 's going to marry," said the smallest frog. "That 's what 's the matter!"

"And then there will be ever so many little suns," said the biggest frog. "And — er — and — er — why, we 'll all burn up then, because one sun is so hot we can hardly stand it, and — er — and — er — "

"Who said the sun was going to marry?" said Spotty. "Maybe it is n't true."

"Yes, it is," said the largest frog. "I know it 's true, because my mother told me."

"And who told your mother?" said Kerchunk.

"Somebody told her, that 's who," said the largest frog; "and somebody else told that somebody, and somebody else told that somebody, and somebody else told that somebody, and — er — "

"Your great-grandmother's aunt's first cousin told somebody else, I guess," said somebody close to their side, and there stood Mrs. Thrifty-Ant, laughing and laughing.

"You poor foolish little frogs!" she said. "I wonder if Kerchunk is in that crowd. The sun marry, indeed! Who ever heard of such a thing! See how he is laughing at you from the sky, — you foolish, foolish little frogs!"

And then the seven little frogs looked at the four little frogs, and the four little frogs looked at the seven little frogs, and then they all jumped with a g–r–e–a–t b–i–g splash into the water, ashamed to show their faces, — those foolish little frogs!

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

IN these days the best primary teachers are good kindergartners, and the best kindergartners are good primary teachers. However ideal this may be, it cannot always be the case, since many earnest teachers have had neither time nor opportunity for special preparation, and for this reason I offer a few suggestions as to the best use of this book.

The fables chosen were those whose subject-matter fitted into the everyday experience of child-life, hiding morals to correct such faults as deceit, stinginess, selfishness, tale-bearing, vanity, lying, bragging, disobedience, laziness, quarrelling, etc., reflecting their opposite virtues as possessions truly beautiful.

Of course, it is not intended that the teacher should point out to the child the moral of each fable. They were hidden on purpose, and the child alone should be allowed to find them.

Some one has said that the child possesses no sense of humor. He does possess humor, but, like all other faculties, it needs cultivation; and no teacher should be too busy to see and laugh with her children at the funny things that so often happen. It relaxes tension as nothing else can do; and the small five-year-old critics who helped me write these tales found many funny places along the way, and showed their appreciation. The stories should always be read to the children as a whole, either before or after the lesson; otherwise their minds will be so taken up with the technicalities of the printed page that they will fail to catch the tale in its

connected form, thereby missing its true significance.

Devote occasional periods to reproduction work, encouraging the children to tell the stories, calling attention to proper expression, and commending accuracy. At first the result will not be good, but persevere; to tell a story well is a great accomplishment, and the beneficial memory training is of untold value.

At the manual training period adopt work illustrative of the stories. If you have n't time for manual training, *make* time, for no investment could pay better; and that even our rural teachers may gather the advantage of these lessons, I have mapped out for each story, in addition to written exercises, suggestions for manual training on a simple and inexpensive basis. The more the child is encouraged to use material within his reach,

the stronger he will be throughout life; for frugality is a virtue we all should strive for, and childhood is the place to begin. The written exercises will be found very interesting to the children, and will aid them in training that very important faculty of the mind, — thinking.

SEAT WORK

Blackie's Fright — Chapter I

Moral: Appearances are deceptive.

Write the names of all the animals you can think of.

Model a rat. This may be derived easily from the cylinder. If there is no natural clay in your locality, order several pounds of oiled clay, which will be sufficient for a year's work, each child keeping his own piece of clay in his desk.

The Rat Meeting — Chapter II

Moral: Talking is easier than doing.

Write the names of all the rats mentioned in the story. Model a cat. Derive from the cylinder.

Blackie's Country Home — Chapter III

Moral: True strength lies not alone in what one does, but in what one refrains from doing.

Write a list of the games Blackie liked to play. Write a list of the games that *you* like to play. Draw a large bean. Add four legs, two ears, one nose, one eye, and a curly tail. What is it?

Mr. Lion — Chapter IV

Moral: None are too small to help.

Write the longest word in this story. Write the longest word you know. Draw on a sheet of paper many lines of dots nearly an inch apart. Can you change them into the strong net which held Mr. Lion? Try.

Mrs. Blackrat's House Party — Chapter V

Moral: Scant fare with peace is better than luxuries with fright.

Write a list of the good things kept in the pantry at Madison Square. Write a list of the things Blackie ate in the country.

Tear from paper a round pie, a cake, a glass of jelly, a pea-pod. It is easy to do. Roll all scraps of paper into a firm, round ball.

The Gray Cat's Tricks — Chapter VI

Moral: Caution is worth its cost.

1. B
2. r
3. o
4. w
5. n
6. i
7. e

Write a word of three letters in each one of these blanks. *Bud* is the first one. Draw a tub of meal, the fence, and the Gray Cat.

Blackie and Mr. Bullfrog — Chapter VII

Moral: Disobedience fosters trouble. The best-contrived deceit can hurt its own contriver.

Fold a paper 4×4 into 16 square inches. Change this into Blackie's A B C book. Write his lessons in it. Read me a story from the book. (Good language lessons may be derived by this plan.)

Blackie at Madison Square — Chapter VIII

A true incident, proving that animals, like men, are attracted by music.

Fill out these blanks with words of three letters, answering these puzzle questions:

1. B	The first is where you sleep.
2. l	The second is a little boy.
3. a	The third is a tiny insect.
4. c	The fourth is an animal.
5. k	The fifth is a kind of baby.
6. i	The sixth is hard and cold.
7. e	The seventh is what you like to do.

Fold a paper 4×4 into 16 square inches. Tear off one of the four-inch strips and paste it into a strip 2×1. Construct an oblong box from the other piece of paper by tearing the corners and pasting into shape. Paste the two-inch strip to the inverted box, mark the keyboard, and you will have a piano.

(A whole set of furniture can be made on this same basis. Encourage the children to create. It is through *this* principle that civilization advances.)

Blackie in the Trap — Chapter IX

Moral: Experience is the best teacher.

Draw Blackie in the trap. Write the following story beneath your picture, filling in the blanks.

I see Blackie — —— ———.

He is sitting ——— ———.

I see the little Mistress —— ——— ———.

She will ——— the ——— for ———.

Blackie's Picnic — Chapter X

Moral: Whatever way you wend
Consider well the end.

Write the names of the things Blackie ate at his picnic lunch. Write the names of the things you would like to eat at a picnic lunch.

Fold a paper 4×4 into 16 square inches. Tear each one of the four corners one inch, constructing a square box. Tear a small door in the edge, invert, and you have the house where Blackie found the corn. Let the children suggest a way to add the roof.

Blackie's Egg — Chapter XI

Moral: Where there 's a will, there 's a way.

Play you are walking through the woods. Write

the names of all the things you see. Model an egg. Change your egg into a chicken.

Ringtail's Journey — Chapter XII

Moral: Ignorance is seldom bliss.

Write a word of three letters in each one of these blanks, answering the following puzzle questions:

1. R	The first is a bright color.
2. i	The third is what you do when
3. n	sleepy.
4. g	The fifth is a number.
5. t	The sixth belongs to a cobbler.
6. a	The seventh is when you are sick.
7. i	The eighth is something you must
8. l	never tell.

Draw all the things Ringtail saw on his journey.

The Circus Parade — Chapter XIII

Moral: A boasting spirit has its fall.

Write a list of all the animals in the parade.

Let each child choose and model one of the animals.

Form a circus parade of the collection.

Be content with crude results.

The Cheese House — Chapter XIV

Moral: Selfishness. Prayers without deeds are best unsaid.

Draw a rat. Write a rat tale beneath the picture.

Fold a paper 4×4 into 16 square inches. Tear or draw a door and two windows and you have a picture of Mrs. Solemncholy's house.

Mrs. Grasshopper Gay — Chapter XV

Moral: There 's a time for work and a time for play.

Copy these lines: —

> If you wish to be happy, Mrs. Grasshopper Gay,
> Why then you must work as well as play.

Draw a sequence of the story, — the field, tree, squirrels, hive, and bees. Let the best work be reproduced on the board.

Free invention: Tear from paper a beehive. Two fine ones can be derived from one folding paper 4×4. Encourage the children to try. Be sure they have seen a beehive, and good results will follow.

Mrs. Thrifty-Ant's Fall — Chapter XVI

Moral: To show to all your kindness it behooves;
There 's none so small but you his aid may need.

Write from memory the name of the farmer's son, the name of the ant, and those of her three children. Model an egg; change it into a dove. This is easy to do.

The Wax House — Chapter XVII

Moral: The artist by his work is known.

Copy, and fill in these blanks. —

This is the ——— the bees made.

These are the —— who stole the ——— the bees made.

This is the —— who helped the —— to get their ——— the —— ———.

Fold paper 4 × 4 into 16 square inches. Tear into halves and quarters. Fold one of the quarters into a triangle. Paste one of the two-inch squares down, and the triangle at its back edge. Draw an opening for the bees. What have you? Invent something with the remaining quarters.

Mr. Rabbit's Ears — Chapter XVIII

Moral: The cause of fright is often but a shadow.

Write a list of animals that have horns.

Write a list of animals that do not have horns.

Model a ball; change it into a cylinder; change this into a rabbit.

Jimmy Gnat — Chapter XIX

Moral: Self-praise is half scandalous.

1. J
2. i
3. m
4. m
5. y
6. G
7. n
8. a
9. t

Write a word of three or four letters in each blank. See if you can make puzzle questions for some of them.

Drawing: Illustrate the story.

The Wee Birdies — Chapter XX

Moral: Depend on self alone.

Write the names of all the birds you know.

Model a nest and eggs.

The Wee Birdie's Neighbors — Chapter XXI

Moral: One fish in hand is worth two in the water.

Write eight things that a stork has: 1. Bill, 2. , 3. , 4. , 5. , 6. , 7. , 8. .

Draw a large egg. Add a long, crooked neck, a head, one eye, two feet, and a tail. What have you?

Mr. Fox and his Dinner Party — Chapter XXII

Moral: Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

Write the names of those you would invite to a dinner party.

Fold a paper 4 × 4 into 16 square inches. Tear into halves and quarters. Change each quarter into a plate or dish. Decorate them with colored pencils.

Mr. Heron's Dinner Party — Chapter XXIII

Moral: It is often beneficial to take your own medicine.

Write words of three letters in these blanks, answering the puzzle questions:

1.	D	The first is an animal.
2.	i	The second makes you feel sick.
3.	n	The third is good to eat.
4.	n	The fourth is the name of a boy.
5.	e	The fifth is on your head.
6.	r	The sixth is in your body.
7.	P	The seventh is good for lunch.
8.	a	The eighth is joined to you.
9.	r	The ninth is liked by cats.
10.	t	The tenth holds water.
11.	y	The eleventh is the same as when you bow your head.

Model a vase with a long, slim neck. Model a dish. Draw them.

Mr. Fox and the Turkey Tree — Chapter XXIV

Moral: 'T is doubly sweet deceiver to deceive.

Write the names of animals seen in a barnyard.

Draw the *Turkey Tree.*

Mr. Fox and Mr. Thomas Cat — Chapter XXV

Moral: Pride goes before a fall.

Write a list of things kept in a grocery store.

Write another list of things kept in a dry-goods store.

Fold a paper 4 × 4 into 16 square inches. Change this into a purse or a market basket.

Mr. Thomas Cat's Chestnuts — Chapter XXVI

Moral: A tongue of flattery will turn the wisest heads.

Write a list of all the nuts you know.

Make a water-color, showing chestnuts in the bur.

Mr. Eagle and Old Mrs. Owl — Chapter XXVII

Moral: The proof of saying is *doing.*

Write a list of all the animals who went to the race.

Tear from paper an owl. Color it brown.

Old Mrs. Owl's Children—Chapter XXVIII

Moral: Honesty is the best policy.

Copy the rhymes in the story.

Make a water-color, showing a pine-tree with a nest in its branches.

Little Miss Magpie—Chapter XXIX

Moral: Tattle-tales possess no friends.

Write words of four letters in the blanks, answering these puzzle questions:

1. M	The first is a little girl.
2. a	The second is the end of your prayers.
3. g	The third will open and shut.
4. p	The fourth is a fruit.
5. i	The fifth is hard and black; sometimes soft, red and white.
6. e	The sixth can see.

Model an egg; change it into Little Miss Magpie.

Little Miss Magpie at Madison Square—Chapter XXX

Moral: Quarrels more often rob than pay.

Write a list of the tricks Little Miss Magpie could do.

Fold a paper 4 × 4 into 16 square inches. Cut the corners and paste into a 2-inch box. Fold an-

other paper and tear into halves and quarters, tearing a wheel from each quarter. Paste on the cart, with a strip for the tongue, and you will have Little Miss Magpie's cart.

Snowflake — Chapter XXXI

Moral: Two sureties are better than one, and caution 's worth its cost.

Use only these letters, and see how many new words of three letters each you can form: S, n, o, w, f, l, a, k, e.

Fold a paper 4 × 4 into 16 square inches. Tear a door and two windows. Fold another paper into a triangle, use it as the roof, and you will have a picture of Snowflake's house.

Fleetfoot and Billy — Chapter XXXII

Moral: It always pays to be polite.

Copy the first paragraph of the story.

Fold a paper 4 × 4 into 16 square inches. Fold this into a bridge 4 inches long, 2 inches wide, and 1 inch high. Let the children do their own thinking.

Kerchunk — Chapter XXXIII

Moral: Pride goeth before a fall.

Write what Mrs. Thrifty Ant said when Kerchunk told her he had been called a queen.

Tear a duck from paper.

Kerchunk's Sisters — Chapter XXXIV

Moral: Fear makes fools.

Write the names of Kerchunk's sisters, and add two other names you think good for frogs.

Model a frog.

The Seven Little Travellers — Chapter XXXV

Moral: Don't believe all you hear.

Write in the blanks words of four letters each, answering these puzzles:

1. K	The first is what you give your mother before going to bed.
2. e	The second can hear best.
3. r	The third is the name of a flower.
4. c	The fourth is something to ride in.
5. h	The fifth means to keep quiet.
6. u	The sixth is how you look when you frown.
7. n	The seventh is the home of a bird.
8. k	The eighth wears a crown.

Draw with colored crayons a sequence of the story, — the sun, the log, and the seven little frogs. Have the best picture reproduced on the blackboard.